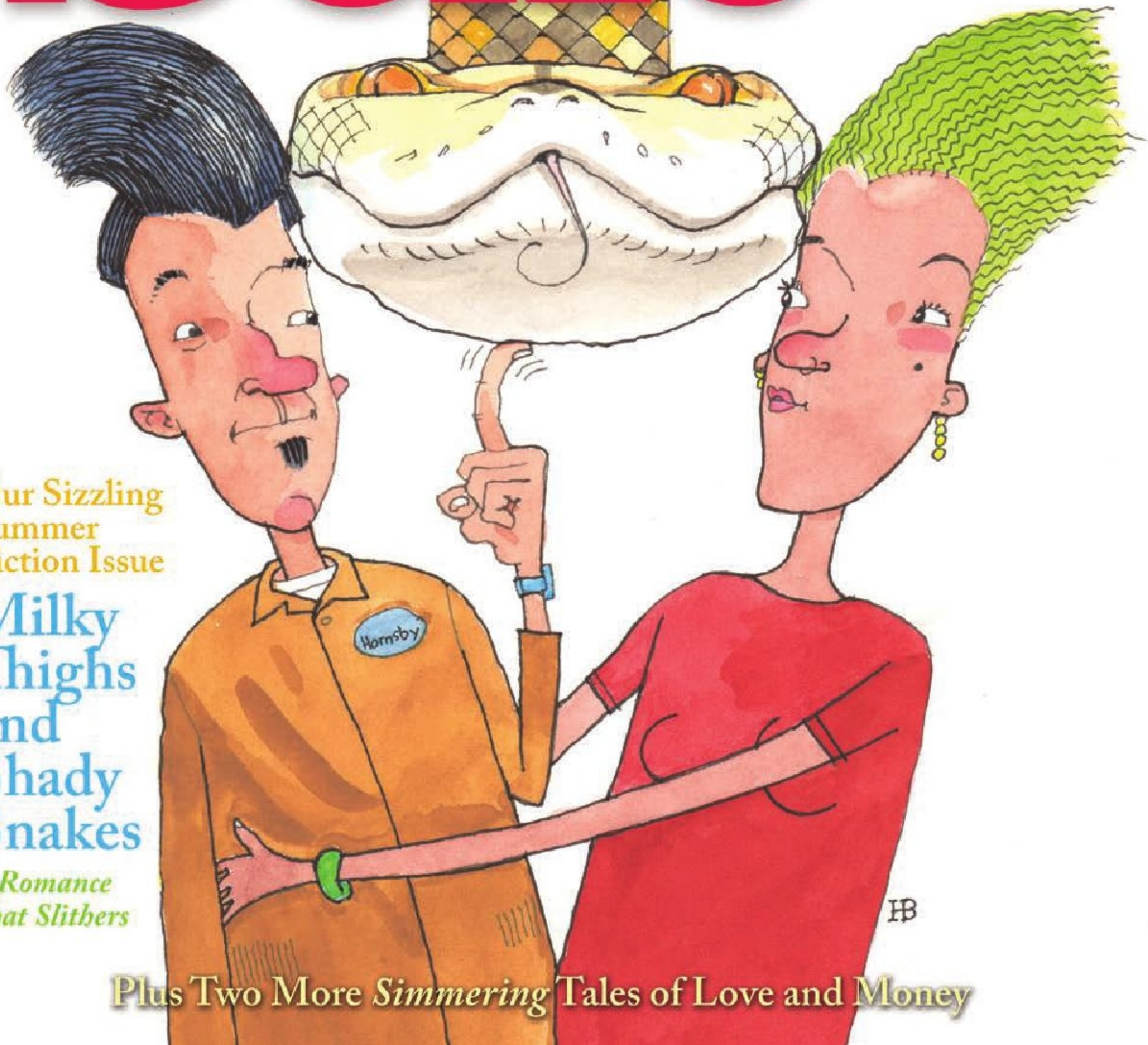
Salt

August 2015

The Art & Soul of Wilmington



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A Romance That Slithers

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Waterfront at Wrightsville Beach! Does it get any better? Property includes a 55 ft. boat slip, exterior maintenance by the association and is across the street from the world famous "Loop". **$799,000**

1927 Deep Creek Run · Mason Landing Yacht Club

Boater's paradise in Northern New Hanover County. Enjoy this quality built home by Cress Bell of Jordan Built Homes with waterfront clubhouse and pool plus a 30 ft. boat slip. **$899,000**

2008 Montrose Lane · Landfall

This shake sided low country design is located in Landfall's estate neighborhood, The Highlands and overlooks the Nicklaus Marsh #2 golf hole, a picturesque par 3 with golf cart on the far side of the fairway. **$1,195,000**

801 Shell Point Place · Landfall

Situated on a 30 ft. bluff overlooking the tranquil tidal waters of Howe Creek, this quality built home by master craftsman Fred Murray takes full advantage of the site. **$1,095,000**

1505 S. Moorings Drive · Fairhaven at Landfall

All the bells and whistles here! This Fairhaven property (used sparingly as a second home) is complete with pool, fountain, outdoor fireplace and grilling kitchen overlooking the Nicklaus course and a tranquil pond. **$749,000**

16 S. Ridge Lane · Duneridge Estates

Feel right at home and ready to relax in this 5 bedroom, 4½ bath oceanfront residence at the north end of Wrightsville Beach with an elevator and 2-car garage. **$2,495,000**

7405 Nautica Yacht Club · Masons Landing Yacht Club

This home checks all the boxes! Quality built new construction, 30 ft. boat slip, small friendly neighborhood with waterfront clubhouse and pool. An open floor plan, covered porches and large windows to bring the sunshine in! **$875,793**

1132 Arboretum Drive · Landfall

Here is a lovely 4 bedroom all brick home on a large half acre lot with a first floor master bedroom suite. Home was upgraded in 2012 with granite countertops, stainless appliances, finished Carolina Room plus a second floor new bedroom/office and bath. **$509,000**

2042 Albert Circle · Birch Creek

End unit townhouse/condo featuring 3 bedrooms, 3 baths, vaulted family room with fireplace and a single car garage. Enjoy the convenience of this mid-town location tucked quietly off Wrightsville Avenue with a mature canopy of trees. **$149,000**

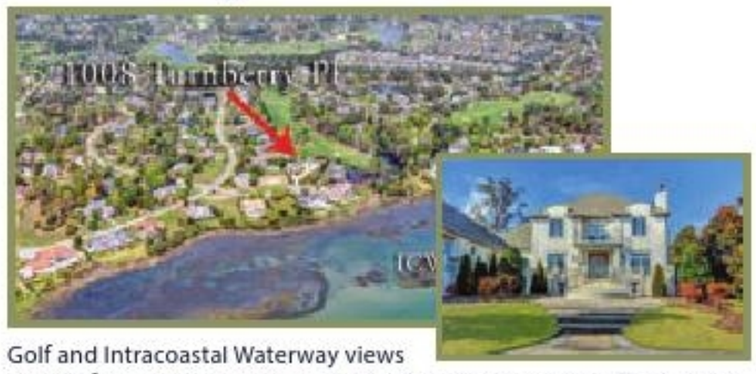
7 Oak Landing Road · Oak Landing Townhomes

Looking for a sense of space and privacy without the upkeep and maintenance? This 3 bedroom, 2½ bath townhouse has been handsomely updated and overlooks centuries old moss draped live oaks with lots of green common areas. **$575,000**

8901 St. Ives Place · Porters Neck Plantation

This stately brick residence built by Dan Kent features a front auto court with 4 car garage. A sunny disposition is a certainty in this home as vaulted ceilings and floor to ceiling glass welcome golf and water views from nearly every room. **$849,000**

1008 Turnberry Place · Landfall



Golf and Intracoastal Waterway views abound from nearly every room in this hill top brick residence. This home is surrounded by inspiring natural beauty and stunning architecture. **$1,349,000**

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August 2015

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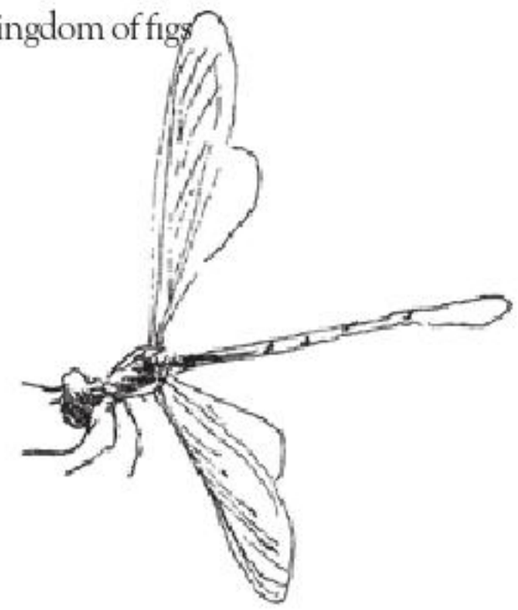

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Salt
MAGAZINE

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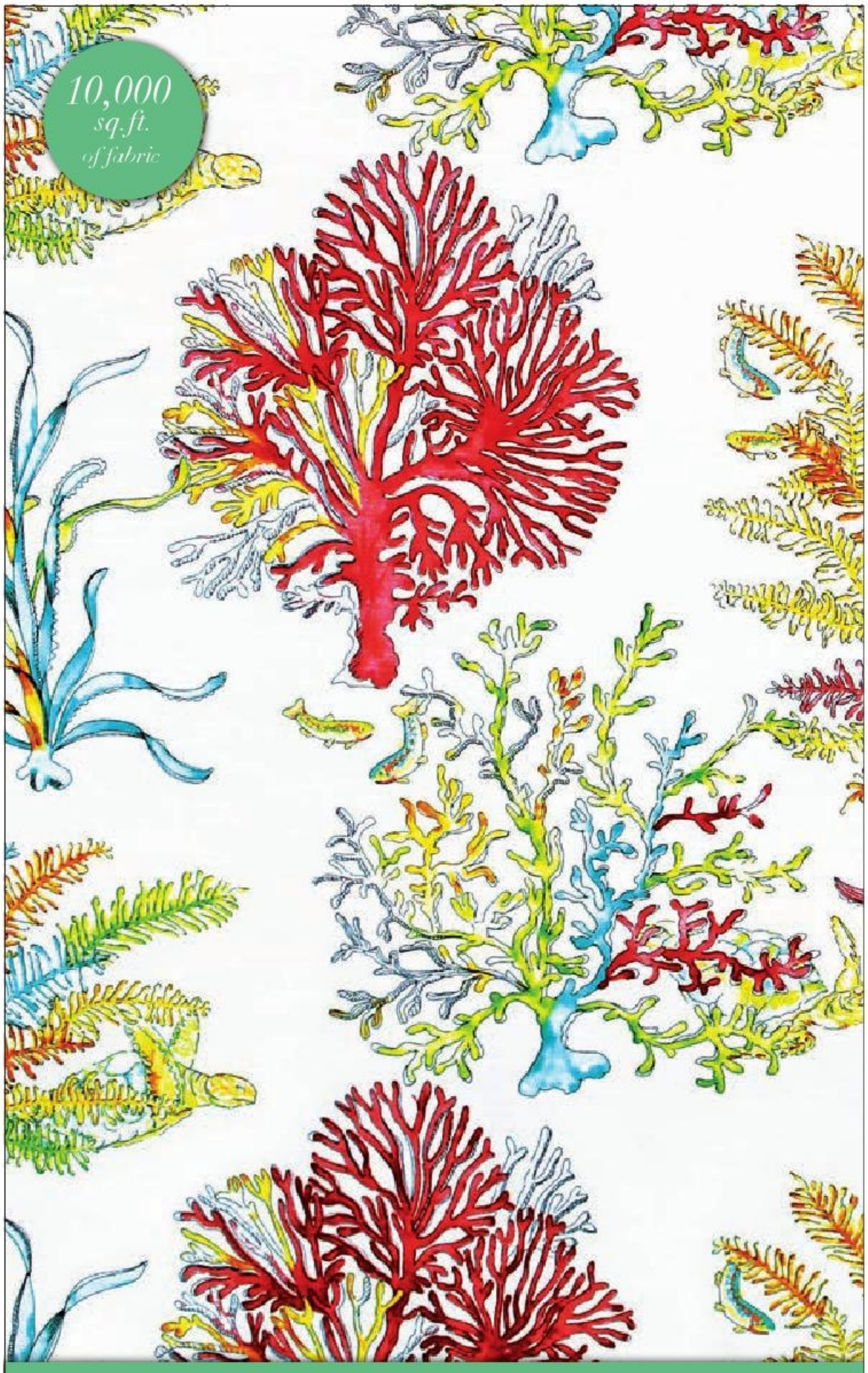

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Peonies, 1959

By Jim Dodson

Because I grew up in the rural South before the coming of mass air-conditioning, I learned early from a wise and unexpected source the many benefits of staying as still as possible on a broiling August afternoon.

"Be still now, child. Too hot for that nonsense," Miss Jesse May Richardson gently scolded as I squirmed uncomfortably on the plastic-sheathed front seat of her elderly Dodge while riding home from Vacation Bible School or the weekly trip she made to the Piggly Wiggly supermarket for my mother.

"Sit still long enough," she added, "ain't no tellin' what you'll see and hear."

I asked what sort of things she meant.

She smiled, a Southern sphinx, never taking her eyes from the street.

"Could be what the birds are saying to each other way up yonder or what the trees are really thinkin'. I can't tell you what. Be still and find out for yourself."

Miss Jesse May was full of such peculiar sayings, also fully in charge of me that summer of 1959. While my mother recuperated from her second miscarriage in five years, resting through the long hot afternoons beneath a slowly turning ceiling fan, and my older brother was off at church camp having the time of his life, I was left to roam the shaded yard of our old house on Poplar Street or ride my bike to the stop sign at the end of our block, forbidden to go any farther.

Fortunately I had books to read, a wooden box full of them, and a King Edward cigar box full of painted soldiers to play with beneath the porch. An early reader, I'd finished half a dozen chapter books that year, beginning with *The Boxcar Children* and moving on to *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *Wind in the Willows* and starting on Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Tarzan* series.

That summer, whenever I wasn't conducting wars in the cool earth below the porch, I was working my way through the *Golden Book Encyclopedia (Book One – Aardvark to Army)* and the *Illustrated Books of Greek and Roman Myths* and more *Tarzan* books.

Some afternoons after Bible School and before lunch, old Miss Gilchrist's gray cat Homer hopped the rail and sprawled out on our porch while I sat reading on a creaky rusted glider.

More than once I found Homer snoozing in the cool earth and dim world beneath the porch, where I dug forts for my hand-painted knights and Greek soldiers, conducting my own siege of Troy using a large plastic model of Roy Rogers' horse Trigger with a booby hatch cut into his belly, a makeshift wooden horse. My mother said Homer was a perfect name for a yard cat in the Trojan War.

The screen door above me whined, and slapped.

"You need to come in now for lunch. Make sure you wipe off them filthy feet. Don't be trackin' nothing in my clean house."

I missed Wilmington so much I could spit. That was where my daddy worked for two years at the *Star News* after losing his weekly newspaper to a scoundrel in a linen suit down in Gulfport. Across the street from our house in Wilmington was Greenfield Lake with its haunted dark water and lazy paddleboats and cypress trees draped with veils of Spanish moss.

I missed the drawbridge to Wrightsville Beach and Newells, where you could slide your bare, sand-burned feet on the cool tile floor; the Little Lagoon just off the causeway, where I learned to swim the first summer evenings we lived there; the wide porch of the Hanover Seaside Club, where the adults always gathered for evening cocktails while we kids eyeballed sand sharks hanging on the Lumina Pier and the awkward smirking teenagers at the roller rink.

Wilmington was summer heaven, a place I could have lived forever. It was supposed to be the first stop on the long road home to Greensboro, where my father's people still lived and farmed outside the city. But somehow we'd mysteriously left and wound up in the sleepiest, slowest town in the world, probably even all of South Carolina.

Who explains such things to a 6-year-old?

This much is true. I had perfect attendance at the Royal School that year, reading more books than any other kid in my class, earning a small brass lapel pin shaped like an open book with the word "Wisdom" inscribed on it.

But save for Homer the cat and Miss Jesse May I had no real companions, no real friends to speak of that long hot summer.

Curiously, there was a public swimming pool in the park just two blocks south of our house. But my mother refused to let me go there because she disapproved of the sign that read "No Coloreds Allowed." When I pointed out to her that I wasn't colored, she threatened to make me sit on the toilet with a new bar of Ivory soap clenched in my teeth until I learned better. I once foolishly used the word "nigra" after hearing my father's boss use it in a joke I didn't really understand when he came to supper one evening, grinning like a cadaver and rattling the ice in his sweating highball glass. That resulted in my first taste of Ivory soap.

Lunch was a glass of cool Maola milk and either a fresh tomato sandwich with mayonnaise and sweet pickles or sometimes a bologna sandwich on Wonder Bread as white as a church robe with a couple of Miss Jesse May's homemade peanut cookies.

After that, I was supposed to nap for two hours, though I rarely did.

Mostly I lay flat on the nubby chenille bedspread staring at the ceiling fan or out my bedroom window, thinking of Tarzan and seeing dusty herds of elephants with what Miss Jesse May called my "special" eye, oblivious to the drone of cicadas that made the August air sound roasted.

Eventually, there was stirring, soft footsteps followed by another whine and slap of the screen door.

My mother was going out to the yard to work in her new flower garden. She liked to say you were closer to God's heart in a garden. She also said South Carolina was too hot for proper peonies in August, but she'd planted them anyway and somehow made them bloom, creamy pale yellow, the sweetest smelling things you ever put to your nose.

I think they came from Miss Jesse May's garden, along with butter beans

ILLUSTRATION BY KIRA SCHOENFELDER

and yellow squash. When we finally moved to Greensboro that winter, my mother dug up those peonies and took them with her. They grow in profusion where she planted them to this day.

My mother hailed from West Virginia, the youngest of eleven children — eight large German blond sisters and three strapping brothers — who grew up on a mountain named for their family. Her daddy was a fiddle-playing coal miner.

She'd eventually moved to Cumberland, Maryland, and met my father there in 1941, not long after she'd won the Miss Western Maryland contest. My father was a sharp dresser, a newspaper salesman and aviation writer who was about to enlist in the Army Air Corps. He met my mother when she was selling Big Band records at McCrory's, engaged to marry a rich guy named Earl who owned a Stutz Bearcat.

He asked her out even though he didn't own a record player. They got married six months later.

After losing two babies, my beauty queen mama was learning to cook real Southern food courtesy of Miss Jesse May Richardson — ham-flavored greens, seasoned field peas, real cornbread and buttermilk fried chicken.

Those kitchen sounds as the shadows on the lawn lengthened are the ones I remember best from those faraway August afternoons in a sleepy town where I had no friends but an old cat and my adventure books for companions.

Sometimes Miss Jesse May played gospel music from her transistor radio propped in the open kitchen window while she cooked and chatted with my mother. I could never quite hear what they were saying, but they often laughed together.

It's quite possible that sleepy summer in the world's slowest town saved my mother's life.

It may even be the reason I chose to become a writer and a gardener.

I have Miss Jesse May's recipe for collards committed to memory.

A few years ago, the nice lady who bought my mother's house in Greensboro invited me to come and dig up some of her pale yellow peonies, something I've always meant to do.

The first time I saw elephants in Africa, moreover, it wasn't *Tarzan and the Ant Men* I thought about.

It was my mother and her pale yellow peonies, regaining her spirit and beauty, Miss Jesse May's gospel music and tomato sandwiches in August, books in a box sitting by a rusted glider, and the sweet mystery — never fully deciphered — of what the birds were saying and the trees might really be thinking.

Jim Dodson just finished reading Anthony Doerr's All the Light We Cannot See *and is now working his way through Volume II of Rich Atkinson's remarkable* Liberation Trilogy *this summer.*

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3 W. Asheville- $1,595,000- Wrightsville Beach

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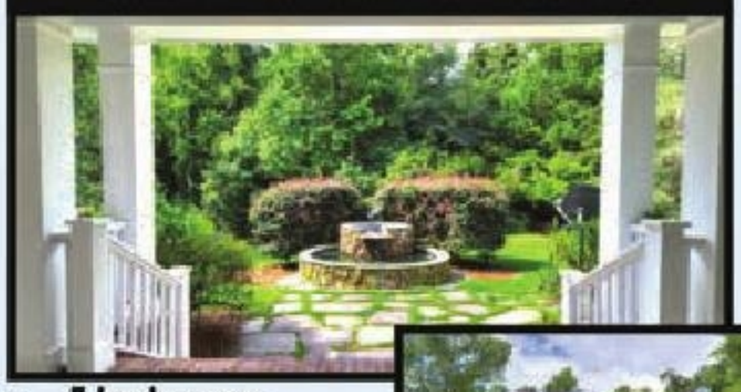
- Lovely Water Views

2221 Moreland Pl- $769,000- Landfall



- 5 bedrooms
- 3.5 bathrooms
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- Cul-de-sac w/porch

121 S. 5th St.- $599,993– Historic Downtown

- 3 bedrooms
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- Beautiful updates

823 Arboretum- $789,000– Landfall

- 3 bedrooms
- 3 Full 2 Half Baths
- 3541 sq. ft.
- FROG w/bathroom

1118 Merchant- $1,250,000– St. Joseph Pl.

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- 3.5 bathrooms
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109 Parmele- $730,037– Wrightsville Beach

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- 2 bathrooms
- 1460 sq. ft.
- Beach cottage

820 Fox Ridge- $480,000– Landfall

- 3 bedrooms
- 3.5 bathrooms
- 2074 sq. ft.
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77726 Bonaventure- $514,000– Marsh Oaks

- 4 bedrooms
- 3.5 bathrooms
- 3846 sq. ft.
- Screened porch

6338 Oleander #19- $339,000– Bradley Creek

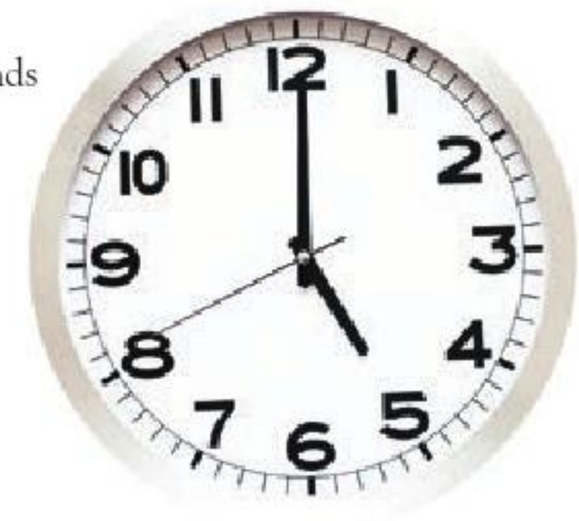
- 2 bedrooms
- 1 Bathroom
- 919 sq. ft.
- Lovely water views

SaltWorks

Full Coverage

Swimsuit season: so not what it used to be. Thursday, August 6, at 6:30 p.m., Elaine Henson will present "Bathing Beauties in Vintage Postcards," an informative and entertaining lecture that examines the evolution of swimwear from the mid-1880s to the 1940s. One wonders what Charles Darwin might have said about it. Admission: $5 (includes light refreshments); free for Lower Cape Fear Historical Society members. Latimer House Museum, 126 South Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-0492 or www.lcfhs.org.

5 o'clock, Somewhere



Want to be among the first to get your hands on a copy of next month's *Salt*? Join us at 5 p.m. — somewhere — on Tuesday, September 1. Fresh-off-the-press copies of our *Home & Garden* issue will be available and you can sip wine and craft brew alongside a few of our regular contributors. Check our Facebook page for location and details toward the end of the month. Info: www.facebook.com/saltmagazineofwilmington.

Crane Your Neck

Last August, *Salt*'s Front Street Spy witnessed an androgynous geisha in a green kimono shuffle along the sidewalks of Downtown Wilmington, silently offering paper cranes to people too afraid to make eye contact. As it turned out, the performer was an international artist named Richard Breuil, his performance part of the 2014 Sarus Festival for site-specific and experimental art. This month, the festival returns. August 15–23, local, regional and international artists will enrich our cultural landscape by bringing stimulating, often downright visceral works to natural and urban spaces in the greater Wilmington area. The space informs the work, but the outcome might be an installation, performance, concert, sculpture, dance, film, lecture or something none of us saw coming. Sites include the Community Arts Center (Sarus homebase), Bellamy Mansion, Downtown Wilmington, Jengo's & Wabi Sabi, Carolina Beach, Wrightsville Beach, The Front Room and Old Books on Front Street. See website for complete schedule and tickets. Info: sarusfestival.org.

As the Plot Twists

Hankering for a little summer romance and drama? August 6–23, Thalian Association presents Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing*. Charlotte is the lead actress in a play written by her husband, Henry. Max, the lead actor, is married to Annie, also an actress. The plot is thick as mango gazpacho. Henry and Annie are having an affair, and the whole theatrical journey is equal parts passion and pain — real as it gets. Showtimes: 7:30 p.m. (Thursday – Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Admission: $25. Red Barn Studio Theatre, 1122 South Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 254-1788 or www.thalian.org.

Walkie Talkie

At Old Books on Front Street, home of "over two miles of books," it's not hard to spend hours poring over the titles and merchandise — coffee mugs, tote bags, bottle openers — all custom-made for the literati. An added bonus if you meet there on a Saturday afternoon, when you can explore over 400 years of Wilmington's literary history on a two-mile, ninety-minute walking tour of downtown that introduces you to the motley cast of characters who have helped shape Wilmington's narrative. Along the way, meet America's first playwright, delight in exquisite details from the filming of Stephen King's *Maximum Overdrive*, visit "The Two Libraries" and jot down summer reading suggestions (Inglis Fletcher's *Carolina Chronicles* series), all while taking a closer look at the landmarks and landscapes that have and continue to set the scene. The past isn't always pretty, but it's all part of our unique story. The Literary History Walking Tour takes place every Saturday at 1:30 p.m. Tickets: $8. Meet at Old Books on Front Street, 249 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-6657 or oldbooksonfrontst.com.

One Man's Trash

On Friday, August 21, save your breakfast scraps (tea bags, coffee grounds – even the morning paper) for later. From 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., the New Hanover County Arboretum will host a "Compost 101" workshop to introduce gardeners and the eco-curious to multiple methods of composting. Includes hands-on demos, dos and don'ts, and insight into the countless benefits of turning your garbage into black gold. General public: $10; free for K–12 teachers. Register online. NHC Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7677 or arboretum.nhcgov.com.

Newgrass at Greenfield

The Infamous Stringdusters – Grammy-nominated bluegrass expansionists – bring their evolving sound to the Wilmington stage on Thursday, August 13, at 6 p.m. Together, Andy Hall (Dobro), Andy Falco (guitar), Chris Pandolfi (banjo), Jeremy Garrett (fiddle) and Travis Book (upright bass) create what's perhaps best described as an audible acoustic cocktail. "Roots can be traced but boundaries don't exist," they'll tell you. And having dusted off their strings at festivals like Telluride, Grey Fox, Bonnaroo and High Sierra, they've developed an exquisite knack for improvisation and unpredictable live shows. Tickets: $20–25. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-3614 or greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

An Artsy Landfall

In North America, some species of gossamer-winged butterflies exist in their adult state for just a few short days. But the display is exquisite. Same goes for the annual Landfall Foundation Art Show and Sale, a three-day spectacle featuring 100 artists (many local) and work that runs the gamut: oil, watercolor, acrylic, photography, sculpture and ceramic. Supported by corporate and individual sponsors, this popular summer art show is held in collaboration with the Wilmington Art Association and is free and open to the public. Proceeds from sales benefit the Landfall Foundation in its efforts to support greater Wilmington area nonprofits. Blink and you'll miss it, so save the dates. Thursday, August 20, through Saturday, August 22, 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.; cash bar open from 5–7 p.m. Country Club of Landfall, Dye Club House, 1550 Landfall Drive, Wilmington. Info: www.landfallfoundation.org.

All That Jazz

In the 1920s, as an answer to a class assignment at the Yale Drama School, an American journalist named Maurine Dallas Watkins wrote a satirical play based on two unrelated court cases she covered for the *Chicago Tribune*. It was the inspiration for the 1975 stage musical that spells Broadway sensation. This month, Opera House Theatre Company presents *Chicago* on Wednesday, August 5, through Sunday, August 9; Friday, August 14, through Sunday, August 16; and Friday, August 21, through Sunday, August 23. Showtimes: 8 p.m. (Wednesday through Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Expect one show-stopping song after another. Directed and choreographed by Ray Kennedy. Admission: $31. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

Summer Love

Ever since the Wilmington Seacoast Railroad Company built its "Beach Car" track from Downtown Wilmington to the "Hammocks" (Harbor Island), Wrightsville Beach has been a major tourist attraction, drawing droves of summer visitors to its yacht clubs, vacation cottages and eventually, in 1905, the famed Lumina Pavilion, whose thousand-plus incandescent bulbs faded to memory in the 1970s. But the spirit of Wrightsville continues to burn bright. Exhibit A: Lumina Daze. On Sunday, August 30, from 5–9 p.m., celebrate Wrightsville Beach by swinging your hips to live music by Wilmington Big Band, the Dixieland All-Stars and The Imitations. Event includes live and silent auctions and history presentations; proceeds benefit Wrightsville Beach Museum. Admission: $15. Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Boulevard, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-2569 or www.wbmuseum.com.

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A Simpler World

Retreat into a cool longleaf forest and a glow-in-the-dark ocean

By Ashley Wahl

Dwarfed by the elephantine presence of an Ice Age ground sloth — or the replica of its 20-foot skeleton, rather — I relish the cool air, milk and honey at the peak of summer. But the real luxury of exploring the Cape Fear Museum on a muggy day in August is the ability to navigate through hundreds of years of Wilmington history in a matter of hours.

Beyond the reptilian-like framework of the Port City's giant hook-clawed herbivore (its bones and others' discovered at a construction site on Randall Parkway in the early '90s), entering the *Cape Fear Stories* exhibit is like stepping into the heart of an ancient longleaf forest.

Sounds of twittering songbirds and tap-tap-tapping sapsuckers are streaming through hidden speakers when the tranquil display of a white-tailed stag stops me in my tracks.

I stare, wholly sucked into the mirage of a woodland landscape, half-wondering which of us will blink first when two girls enter the scene squealing about some kind of museum-themed scavenger hunt. They vanish as suddenly as they appeared, flip-flops smack-smack-smacking someplace between Colonial merchant James Murray's Front Street store and a display where a handful of salvaged buttons helps tell the story of an iron sidewheel steamer captured north of Fort Fisher during the Civil War.

Back to the critters and the trees.

The world feels simpler here, a time when Cape Fear's earliest residents, Native Americans, might have considered the deer a divine gift — a sacrifice for the tribe.

A didactic panel on the role of brush fire in the creation of our region's once-expansive longleaf forests explains how, at first, most of the pine tree's growth is invisible, its thick taproot anchoring deep into Earth.

Among the nature sounds, a young girl finds her voice, repeating her call like a nightjar fledgling.

Yoo-hoo! Yoo-hoo!

She delights in the acoustics, pausing to press her face against the glass on a "Woodland Period" display of artifacts: stone spade and ax, clay pot and pipe, shell necklace, and a conch hoe with a reproduction handle.

Yoo-hoo!

She is with her mom and brother, but as her song reaches the room's lofty corners, she is in her own world.

**

In less than twenty minutes, I witness European settlement, deforestation, slavery, war, yellow fever, more war, and Wilmington mushrooming into the largest city in North Carolina.

I feel drawn to return to the pine forest when a sudden and thunderous clamor shifts my attention to the second floor, where a simple machines exhibit allows guests to experiment with different boat hull designs and pulley systems (hence the clamor). I make my way toward the stairs, but the *Michael Jordan Discovery Gallery* beckons instead, the opening text rousing something deep within me.

I read the last line twice:

Learn how humans alter the delicate balance of nature and how animals adapt as their environment changes.

**

PHOTO COURTESY CAPE FEAR MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND SCIENCE

If you've ever seen a swarm of honeybees disturbed, then you have some idea what it's like inside the *Michael Jordan Discovery Gallery*: children buzzing around in dizzying circles.

The exhibit features interactive displays that bring to life the plants and animals of the Lower Cape Fear.

Beyond a section on tree anatomy — identify turkey oak, red maple and sweet gum by leaf — a girl rounds the corner with an announcement:

"Guys, there's a beaver hut over here!"

The news is well-received. Within seconds, a stampede of children has followed her to the back of a line where a young boy is wringing his hands with excitement.

"That was so fun," he tells the kids behind him, ready to crawl back inside the beaver lodge for another powwow with his classmates.

Nearby, two young girls take turns peering inside a display that simulates bioluminescent phytoplankton.

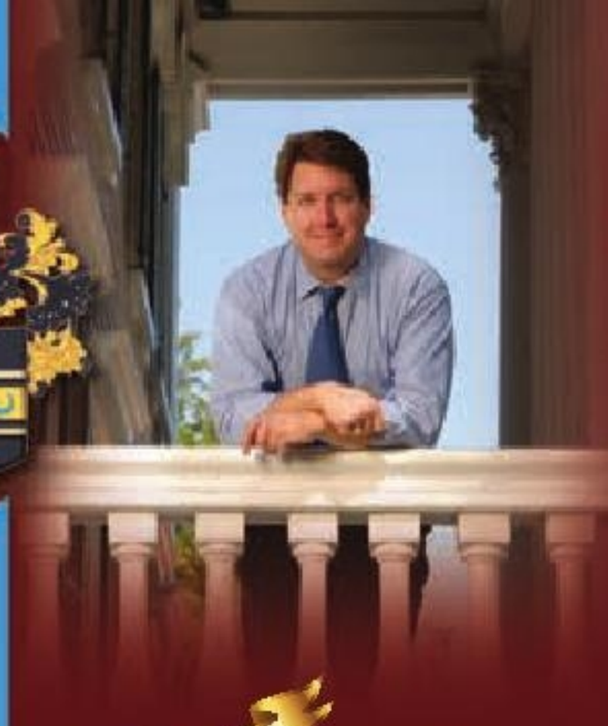
"Oh my goodness . . ." says one.

"It's beautiful," the other replies, the wonder in her voice as magical as the glow-in-the-dark ocean.

**

A pamphlet detailing the Museum's forthcoming Outdoor Learning Environment transports me to the longleaf forest once again. I retreat from the swarm to its tranquil environs and wonder how deep our own roots reach into the natural world.

Our spy, senior editor Ashley Wahl, is prone to wander. What she's reading this summer: Thomas the Rhymer *by Ellen Kushner and Helen Macdonald's* H is for Hawk.



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1542 Magnolia Place — *Magnolia Place/Oleander*

This home sits at the end of an oak lined quiet cul-de-sac with side yard overlooking the tenth fairway of Cape Fear Country Club's golf course. This three bedroom, three bath home offers all formal areas plus sunroom, a cozy den and breakfast room, and a separate children's suite upstairs with bedroom, full bath and huge playroom. It is within walking distance of Cape Fear Country Club and is close to New Hanover Regional Medical Center, downtown, and shopping and dining. **$349,900**

---

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White Bucks

They're just shoes. Sorta.
But what would summer be without them?

By Bill Thompson

I've got two pairs of white bucks (buckskin shoes) in my closet. One pair is about worn out, so I bought the second pair to wear so I wouldn't look as used-up as the shoes. That's what happens sometimes, you know. Our countenance reflects the condition of our shoes. That's where the old expression "down-at-the-heels" comes from. I still wear the old pair when I want to be comfortable and don't have to worry about looking proper.

White buckskin shoes are proper footwear when you want to feel stylish during the summer, particularly down here in the South. They go with just about everything, especially a seersucker suit of any color. I've got blue, grey and brown seersucker suits I love to wear. I saw a light red (pink) seersucker suit one time and I thought about buying that too, but decided it would make me look too much like an ice cream salesman.

I said white bucks are stylish for summer wear because you just don't wear white shoes before Easter or after Labor Day. Other traditional rules that have developed over the years: Wear white socks with white bucks; don't wear them with black slacks; and keep them only moderately clean so they don't look like they are brand-new. White bucks and khakis are always correct. (Just a friendly aside to visitors and Yankees: Down here in the South, khakis are proper attire for just about every occasion short of a formal wedding or funeral.)

White bucks are dress shoes, but unlike other dress shoes, you can't polish them. You just take a stiff brush or a big rubber eraser to them to get the scuff marks off. With other dress shoes you can polish them to such a high sheen that you can almost see your reflection. My old bucks don't shine, but they reflect a lot.

When I look at those old shoes, I remember wearing some just like them to lawn parties (called garden parties if there was a lot of shrubbery) back in my youth, with beautiful girls in bright sundresses showing off their dutifully acquired tans. There was usually a band set up on the patio, beach music wafting through the night air mixed with the smell of perfume and newly mown grass. Lantern lights suspended in the trees cast a soft glow like stardust over us while the white bucks shuffled and spun and flirted with the dyed-to-match pumps of the girl whose fingertips just touched mine as we danced the night away.

Those old shoes also transported me to hundreds of festivals celebrating everything imaginable in the small towns and big cities throughout the South. My white bucks seemed to fit right in with the boots and flip-flops, high heels and sandals. There was always a luncheon or a pig pickin' where everybody wore little name tags and greeted each other with hugs. Sometimes we'd sit at picnic tables or on bales of straw or find any flat surface where we could place our paper plates and plastic cups while we stood and talked and laughed. And there would be a bluegrass band playing under a pecan tree, their high-pitched harmonies and fast-paced instruments setting the tone of excitement and optimism.

I've worn my white bucks to many, many wedding ceremonies and receptions. I've worn them to outdoor nuptials where threatening clouds in the distance were dismissed as being too ephemeral to cast a cloud on the occasion. But I have also run for shelter as those clouds dampened the proceeding, everybody waiting too long to escape getting wet. My white bucks got soaked and muddy as I dashed across a drenched lawn or raced to the car through a dirt parking lot. But those shoes clean up pretty well, surviving with a touch of class.

I had a friend who lived at Wrightsville Beach in the early '80s. His house had a big wraparound porch, always full of flowers and ferns. White wicker furniture spread around the porch, blue and white print cushions lending light and color to the comfortable resting spot. Everything was very ordered but relaxed. He had a few friends over after the garden party at Airlie during the Azalea Festival and I noticed that all the men, including me, wore white bucks. The shoes just sorta came together to go with the style of the porch.

When we get right down to the reality of style, white bucks are just shoes. They are attire for the feet, support for the body, and accompaniment to the clothes we wear. But it seems to me that my particular white bucks have a unique quality. They create lasting memories.

Bill Thompson is a speaker and author who lives just down the road, in nearby Hallsboro.

How the Body Moves

Dancing diva Tracey Varga is everywhere these days, sharing her gifts and vision

By Gwenyfar Rohler

Part of the trouble with writing about dance is trying to describe something that exists purely in the moment — and how it can communicate something about the human experience that transcends words.

Same goes for Tracey Varga. But if there's one thing about this modern dance maven that is for certain, it's that behind that beautiful smile, self-deprecating laugh and bright, quick eyes, a Renaissance woman is waiting to leap out. You think I'm exaggerating? How often of do you hear this? "I struggled back and forth whether to major in dance or med school, so I went back and forth and back and forth . . ." she laughs and trails off, then recounts that her father finally helped her find the answer. He sat her down over Christmas break and said, "Tracey, you do not need to get a degree in dance to dance." If she wanted to dance, she should go to New York; otherwise, get a degree in something she would use.

"So I ended up minoring in dance and majoring in biology and went on to physical therapy school," Varga explains with a laugh. When you think about it, PT is the hybrid between dance and medicine: How does the body move, and why?

Speaking of how the body moves, Varga's introduction to dance was somewhat incidental.

"My mom thought I was a little uncoordinated, so she took me to Carol Jean Dance Studio in Livermore, California, and had me start taking tap." That was at age 5, Varga points out. "I think she had no idea she was going to have to drive me to dance almost every day of the week from then onward." Varga discovered classical ballet and trained intensively all through high school, but it wasn't until a chance jazz class during her senior year that she discovered modern dance.

"I loved it, I absolutely loved it," she slices the air emphatically with her hand. "It was very hard for me to move . . . to let my weight down and actually go on the floor. What are they doing? Ballet is so up! Up!" She pulls an imaginary string above her head upward. But she adjusted and hasn't looked back.

Varga is to modern dance in Wilmington what British actress/fashion muse Tilda Swinton is to film: She disappears into the background while holding up half the sky. What I mean is that it seems like everywhere you turn, Tracey is producing work and bringing people together to collaborate, but she shies away from the spotlight and the accolades. The annual Art Sensation is a great example. Every spring, Varga drums up musical collaborations from across the artistic community for a benefit production to support another nonprofit — *not* Forward Motion Dance, the dance company she founded. Past beneficiaries have included Full Belly Project, Lower Cape Fear Hospice, Domestic Violence Shelter, DREAMS of Wilmington and Indo Jax Surf School. Chamber Music,

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK STEELMAN

Jazz Combos, Big Bands, and the Company 'T' Tap Dancers — the intergenerational tap dance class that Varga teaches — all grace the stage along with Forward Motion Dance and other talented performers from across the community.

"I remember reading an article on the food bank here and how it didn't have enough funds or food to service the families in need," Varga recalls. She was at a crossroads creatively at the time: Wilmington Independent Choreographers had folded, and she felt like choreographers and dancers in the area needed a venue to showcase their work. Why not combine it with some talented musicians and, like Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland, "put on a show" for a good cause? That was fourteen years ago. Like the rest of Varga's dance experiences, it started small and just grew.

Does it sound like she's headed in a lot of directions all at once? Well, that's par for the course. For Varga the key was figuring out how to keep the art separate from the money, so she could focus on her love of dance without having to make it her livelihood; her "day job" as a physical therapist lets her keep dance as a passion. She leans in to tell me the story of the epiphany. "I was in physical therapy school, it was my second year and I woke up at two in the morning and said, 'Something's wrong.'"

That is not an unusual reaction to PT school, which takes a tremendous amount of mental and psychical energy: labs, practicums, internships, etc. Varga had given up dance classes and performances during that time because she physically couldn't commit to being available. "So I woke up at two in the morning and started writing in my journal. 'What is amiss? I'm not dancing. That's what's amiss.'" After graduation she decided to make sure she never made that mistake again and headed to New York to dance. She lived on savings while going to classes, auditions and immersing herself in the world of dance like never before. "I needed to do that — I needed to know that I could go to auditions, be asked to go to auditions. . . . That I could keep up." She takes a deep breath and remembers, "You're scared. They put a number on you, people are waiting outside, there's a line two miles, then you go in, they call you, you've got a number on you . . ." But she did it and then, she had the second epiphany: You don't have to be in New York to dance.

That's the secret Varga has carried with her and shared first in Seattle, now in Wilmington. She shares her gifts and her lessons, hard won though they may be. When she describes Forward Motion Dance it's like this: "The goal of Forward Motion is to have the audience be inspired and find one piece or one part that inspires them to want to come back and go see dance."

Gwenyfar Rohler spends her days managing her family's bookstore on Front Street. This summer, she's reading Inglis Fletcher's Carolina Chronicle *series – "and it is wonderful!"*

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Meet *Jessica Quah*, she's *Uniquely* Greensboro

When Jessica Quah was looking for a small college with a strong music program, she traveled 9,317 miles to find the right fit. Born and raised in Penang, Malaysia, Jessica was seeking a college that offered her the chance to study music and music performance with professors who were genuinely interested in her future.

"Other colleges were nice, but the people at Greensboro College made me feel connected, and that's important," she says.

In addition to her charisma on the keys, she is also a top scholar. Jessica is one of the college's first two recipients of the James S. Barrett Scholarship, the highest level of scholarship offered by Greensboro College. She's a member of the George Center for Honors Studies, has written for the college newspaper, has served as editor of the award-winning Lyre literary magazine and is a member of the Alpha Chi and Sigma Tau Delta honor societies.

Now, as a senior, Jessica is setting her sights on a future filled with graduate school, where she wants to study musicology and pursue a career as a music journalist....endeavors that all began when she decided to strike a chord with Greensboro College.

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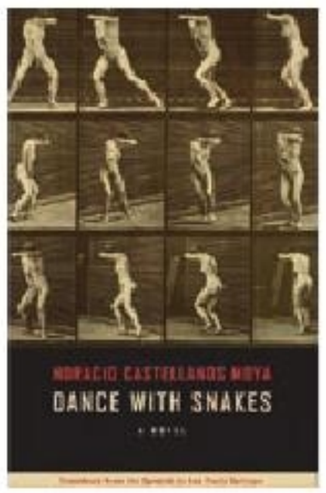
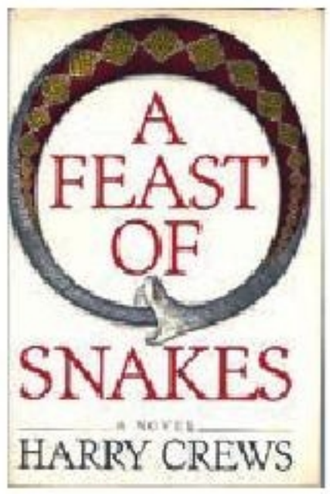
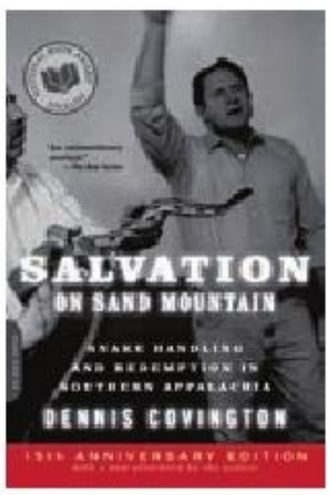
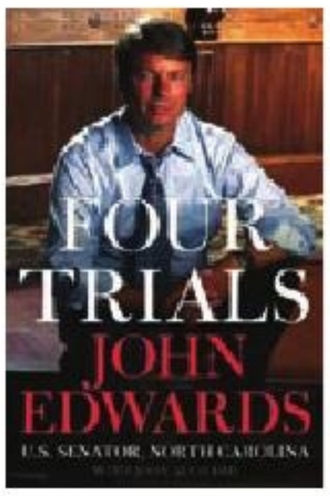
Snake Charmers

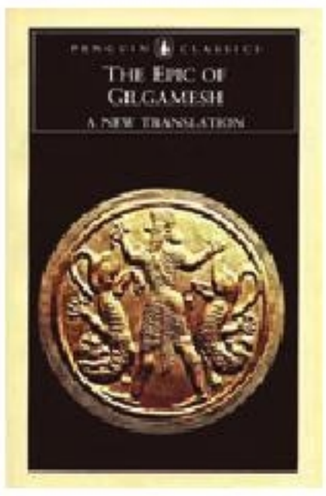
In a state that tops the list for venemous snake bites, a little reading on the subject can't hurt

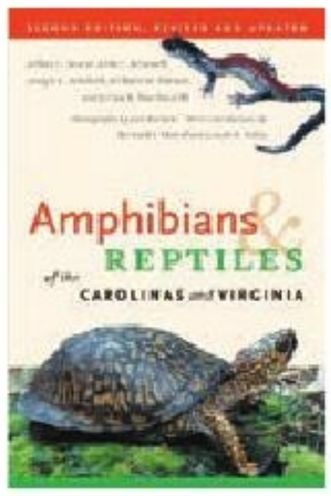


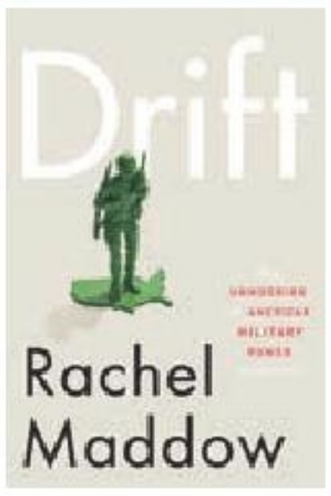












It warms our hearts when North Carolina is at the top of those ubiquitous lists of best places, or when we're "first" or "most" or, sometimes, "least" (like "Least Likely Place to See an 'I Love John Edwards' Bumpersticker"). For many years now, our state has been at the top of a list that no one can be really happy about: North Carolina is the "Snake Bite Capital of the United States." Okay, not just snake bites, but venomous snake bites.

The prime suspect is the stunning copperhead. Secreted among the detritus of the woods or perhaps sunning itself on the very trail you stroll, the copperhead defends itself largely by hiding, but if stealth fails, its next best option is not necessarily escape. It will strike. Seldom fatal, the bite is nevertheless serious, so in this month of snakes hissing in summer lawns, Scuppernong suggests several books to help you sidestep serpents of all shapes and sizes.

Poet Rachel Richardson's 2011 collection *Copperhead* (Carnegie Mellon, $15.95) includes poems such as "Snakebit" and "Cottonmouth" (another of our state's venomous swamp dwellers), and it has my current favorite cover art (see above). Richardson also knows that "copperhead" was the name given to a Northern sympathizer with the Southern cause in the Civil War, so snakes abound. But it is the girl who imagines herself "snakebit" who will keep you thrilled: ". . . her body / tasting the poison, rising / the pinned girl inventing the snake, / inventing the venom."

Anyone looking for (or finding) snakes right here in your own backyard can't go without a strong field guide. *Amphibians & Reptiles of the Carolinas and Virginia* (University of North Carolina Press, $26) has detailed yet easy-to-read descriptions paired with gorgeous photographs of our native amphibians and reptiles from mountains to coast. An ideal at-home reference for any hobby herpetologist. Remember, most bites come from those who *intentionally* handle snakes.

And no one intentionally handles snakes quite like the religious. Dennis Covington's remarkable non-fiction book *Salvation on Sand Mountain: Snake Handling and Redemption in Southern Appalachia* (Da Capo Press, $15.99) drops in on a few Churches of God with Signs Following, and exposes what we expect: madness, cruelty, snakebites, death. What is unexpected is Covington's awakening to the awe-inspiring physical change religious ecstasy might allow. It'll give your prejudice pause.

A missionary is more or less converted to atheism in Daniel Everett's *Don't Sleep, There are Snakes: Life and Language in the Amazonian Jungle* (Vintage, $16). Everett spent years with the Piraha tribe in central Brazil, first as a missionary then as a linguist. The Piraha are a no-nonsense group with no gods, no creation myths, and a language so far removed from every other known language that it is instructive in how language itself is formed. His story is a fascinating one that covers anthropology, linguistics, and an exploration of how primal cultures can survive and flourish without a religious belief system.

The reptiles in Horacio Castellano Moya's *Dance with Snakes* (Biblioasis, $15.95) are not your ordinary run of the mill type. Each has a name, a dis-

tinct personality and they all talk. Our anti-hero Eduardo and his band of scaly friends terrorize the city of San Salvador leaving mayhem and dead bodies in their wake as the police attempt to catch up with them. Moya is Salvadoran and the novel is a savage metaphor of life during the days of the death squads. Very funny and often discomfiting, it's a slithering, hissing, beyond-black-humored satire of violence and a society trying to make sense of chaos, and it culminates in a man-on-snake orgy that really has to be read to be believed.

Not all snakes slither through creeks or under porches; many walk on two legs among us, don tailored suits and run our country. In *Drift* (Broadway Books, $15), Rachel Maddow explores how our populace's insulation from the horrors of war, and therefore ignorance of its true cost, combined with military contracting and the serpentine politicians whose campaign coffers are filled by war machine industries, have lured us into a perpetual state of war. Overall an impeccably researched, eye opening read.

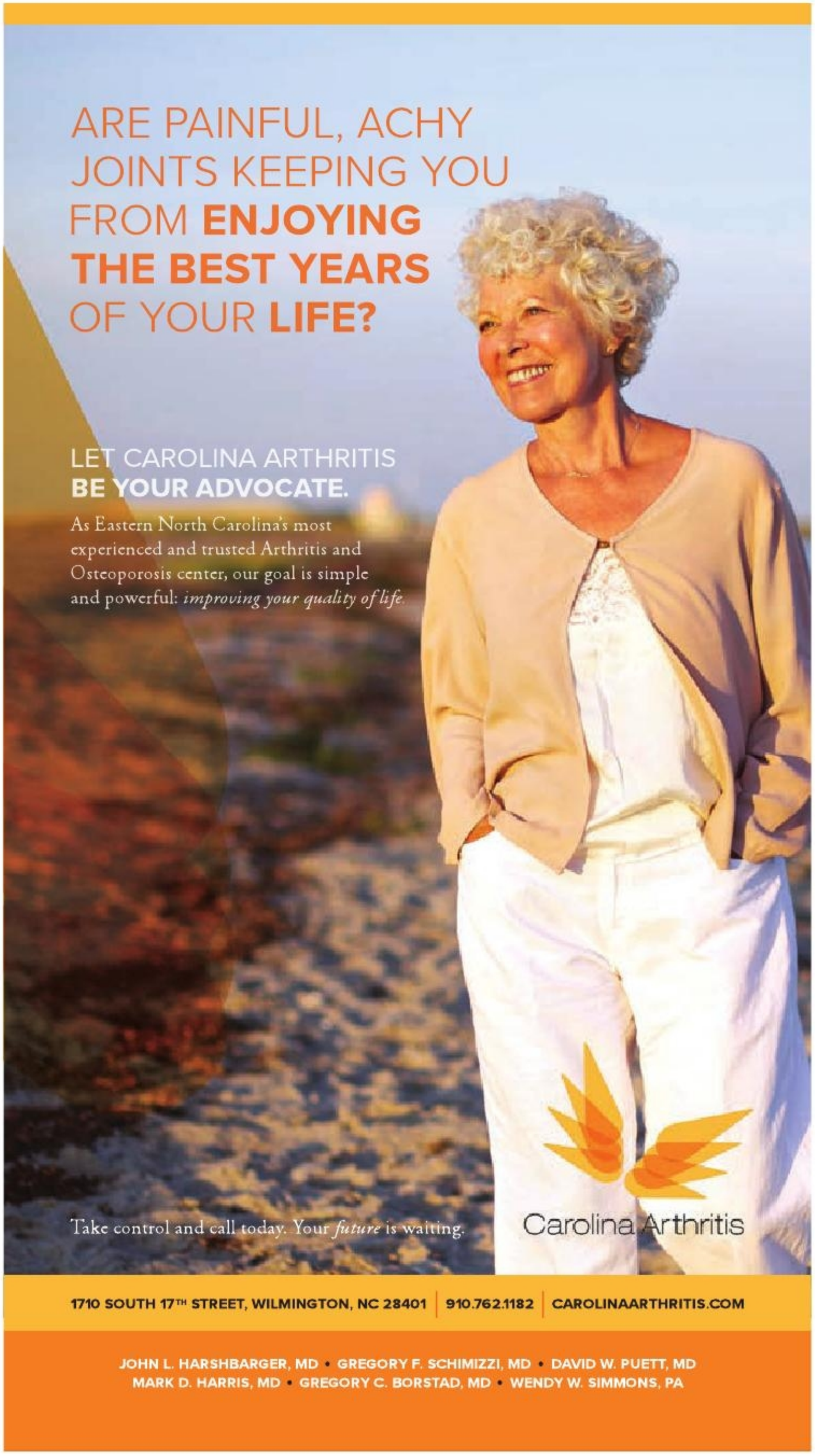
Snakes get blamed for everything! Long before Adam and Eve's story was ever recorded, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Penguin, $11) featured its own sneaky serpent. After the heroic Gilgamesh — two-thirds man and one-third god — travels to depths unknown, through innumerable gate-keepers and guardians of the afterlife, to obtain a flower of immortality, a single snake eats the sacred sapling and ruins everything! Snakes need better publicists.

You know who else needs a better publicist? North Carolina's No. 1 snake, the aforementioned John Edwards. Sen. John McCain once said of Edwards's 2004 book *Four Trials* (Simon & Schuster, $13), "John reveals the strength of his own character and gives the reader a look beyond a political biography into the heart of a good man." And maybe you thought selecting Sarah Palin showed bad judgment.

But let's end with a better Southern story, or at least better writing. The low as dirt characters in *A Feast of Snakes* (Scribner, $13.99), by Harry Crews, enjoy a good rattlesnake for breakfast, and the day goes downhill from there. The novel is set during a Rattlesnake Roundup in Mystic, Georgia, and Crews makes a solid case for the snake as superior creature — it's certainly much less mean and cruel than this brand of Florida/Georgia human.

We end with an impassioned plea for the snake. Let them live! Even the venomous ones are quite beneficial in the big picture. And we find them all quite beautiful in their new bright summer skins.

This month's Scuppernong Bookshelf was written by Shannon Jones, Jonas Procton, Brian Lampkin, Rachel York and Steve Mitchell.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Making the World a Better Place

At Olive Café, a girl out to save the world as a doctor digs down

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES STEFIUK

By Dana Sachs

If you're older than 30, you might get most of your information about young people through the lens of social media. But the outrageous antics of, say, Justin Bieber or Miley Cyrus do little to help us understand the challenges and concerns of today's young people. For perspective, let me steer you in the direction of Hannah Ocasio, 2015 graduate of Ashley High School. Hannah, like many of her peers, has faced both financial hardship and family upheaval, but her own clear-eyed determination, combined with the support of her mother and dedicated teachers, have put her on the path toward becoming a doctor and, she hopes, changing the world. "People want to say that youth is going nowhere," Hannah told me, "but I think we're kind of like a revolution."

Hannah and I met for brunch at Taste the Olive Market & Café, a gourmet shop in the Forum specializing in olive oils and vinegars. I found her sitting at a table when I arrived, so we began our conversation by choosing from a weekend brunch menu that included voluptuous egg dishes, like crab cake Benedict, and extra-indulgent staples, like a "bread-pudding style" baked French toast.

"Any interest in the shrimp and grits?" I asked. When I see shrimp and grits on a Coastal Carolina menu, it feels compulsory, like burgers at McDonald's.

Hannah, fresh-faced and earnest, had been staring at the menu as if I might test her on it. Now she looked up. "I don't really like shrimp," she confessed, "but I am always down for trying."

"Always down for trying," it turns out, could be the phrase that best describes Hannah, who has been *trying* for her entire life. She was born on Long Island, the daughter of a Puerto Rican father and a mother whose roots go back to Ireland, Austria and Germany. Hannah's parents split when she was very young. Her father developed cancer and then, when she was 13, he went to prison for drug-related offenses. Their home went into foreclosure when he failed to pay the mortgage. "I've had to worry my whole entire life," she told me, adding that she had found solace through learning. No one in the family had ever graduated from college, but "that's been my plan since I was born."

It is this plan that has given focus to her life and compelled her forward, despite discouraging odds. Both of her older siblings have struggled to work full time while going to community college and, though her mother managed to take college classes for a few semesters, she ultimately had to drop out to work. In 2011, Hannah and her mother moved to Wilmington, in part because they could more easily afford to live here.

Hannah struggled with the move. She had just left behind a large and loving extended family, and she felt out of place in the New Hanover County school system. The administrators at her new middle school "didn't trust kids," she told me. And when she got lost in the unfamiliar building and arrived late for class, she was made to walk laps around the ball field, a humiliating punishment for an

eighth-grade girl who had always excelled in class. "I went from being treated like an eleventh-grader to being treated like a fifth-grader."

Hannah blossomed when she got to Ashley High, where two mentors, English teacher Peggy Bridgers and science teacher Gwen Abraham — "my second and third mothers," she called them — saw her potential and helped her harness it. Talking about Ms. Bridgers, Hannah blazed with zeal. "She made us debate! We learned about genocide! High-schoolers want to party, but she made us want to be great for the world."

If Ms. Bridgers inspired Hannah's passion, Ms. Abraham helped her find a focus for it. The teacher assigned *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, a nonfiction book that weaves science together with ethical issues about race and class. "When we read that," Hannah said, "we didn't just think, 'That is so cool.' We thought:

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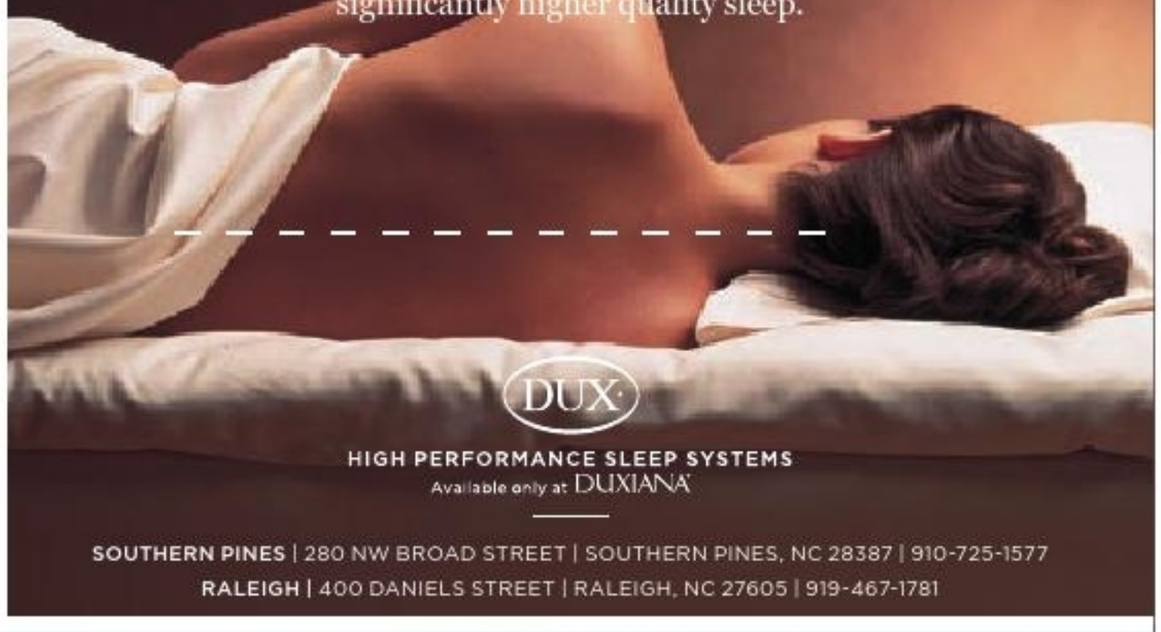

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LUNCH WITH A FRIEND

'I want to do something with science.'" For Hannah, that "something" means going to medical school after college and studying oncology so that she can improve the lives of cancer patients. "You have to have a certain personality to be an oncologist," she explained. "Not just give them bad news, but give them hope."

Our food began to arrive, so we turned to a plate of chicken and waffles — strips of crispy fried boneless chicken breast atop a pair of Belgian waffles laced with crystallized sugar. Hannah tasted it, then offered her assessment: "That's Grade A right there. It's cooked like a chicken nugget but it's not fake slimy meat."

I started to laugh, which caught her attention. "I try not to eat school food," she explained, "because, well, there's no words for that."

She had a lot of words for Taste the Olive's huevos rancheros — corn tortillas topped with refried beans, spicy pesto-flavored pulled pork, and two fried eggs, then covered in a goat cheese-cream sauce. "I've had my share of huevos rancheros, but you know those three things people ask that you'd bring to a desert island? [This version] would be one of them." As for the shrimp and grits, she liked the grits. "They taste like macaroni and cheese," she said, "without the macaroni."

Hannah's optimism about making the world better may have started at Ashley, where she served for years as an informal mentor for her peers. Hannah arrived in Wilmington "on the gay boat," as she put it, having come out as a lesbian in seventh grade. That experience has enabled her to support other teens struggling with their sexuality or their family's reaction to it. "If your mom can't love what she created," she would tell them, "then that's her fault."

When Hannah started her senior year of high school, a guidance counselor suggested that she dampen her expectations about college. That discouragement only made her more resolute. "You're telling me not to reach?" she asked. "Well, I'm reaching for the stars. I'm going to start flying." This month, Hannah proves that prediction as she takes her place among the freshman class at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. In other words, she's poised to soar.

Taste the Olive Market & Café and Wine Bar is at 1125-E Military Cutoff Road, in the Forum. The Sunday Jazz Brunch features live music by saxophonist Benny Hill. For more information and hours, call (910) 679-4772 or visit www.olivecafenc.com.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores throughout Wilmington. Her idea of summer reading includes the likes of George Eliot, Jane Austen and Barbara Pym. Her latest read: E. M. Forster's* Howards End *– "continually interesting and surprising," she says.*

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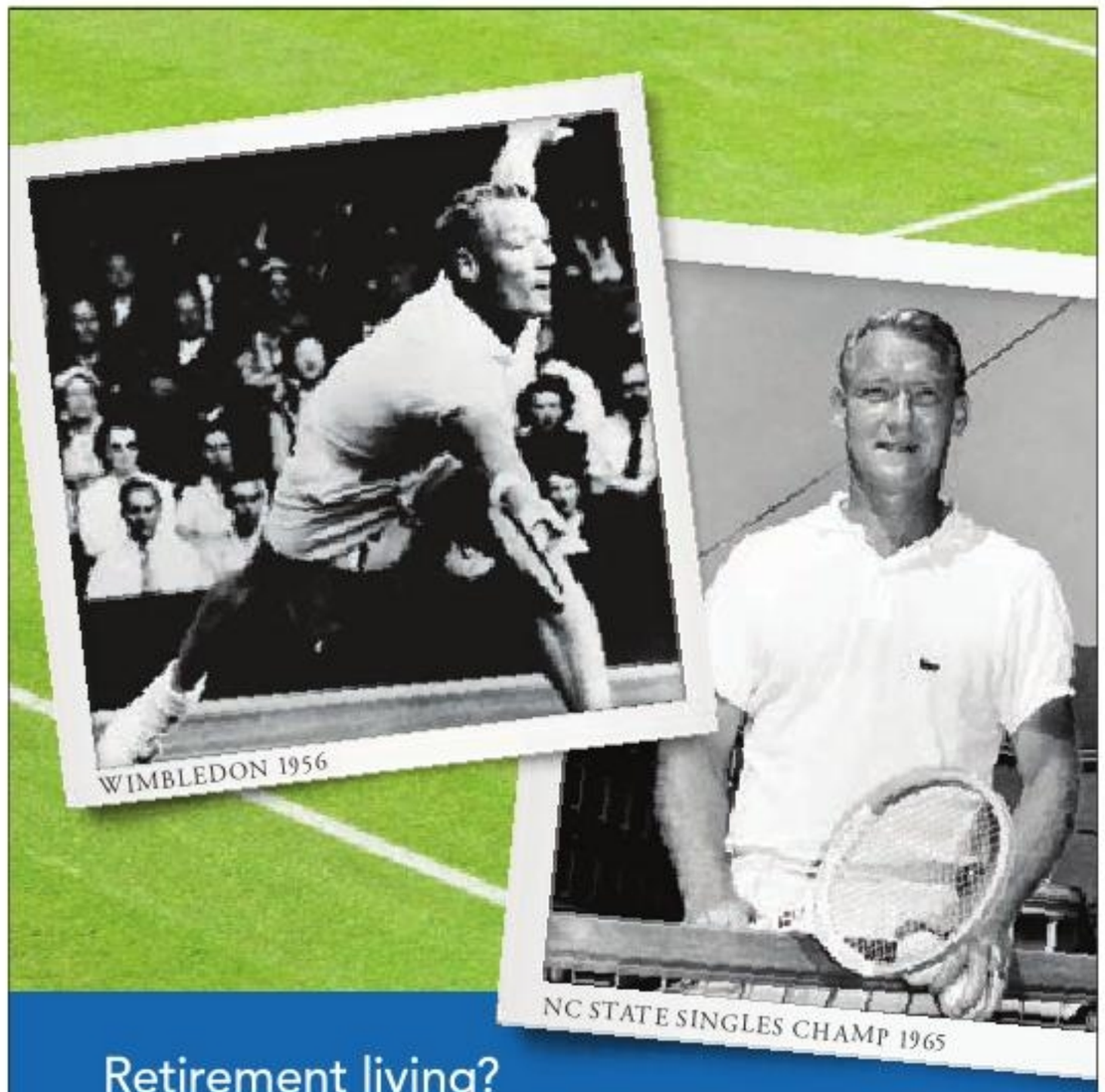

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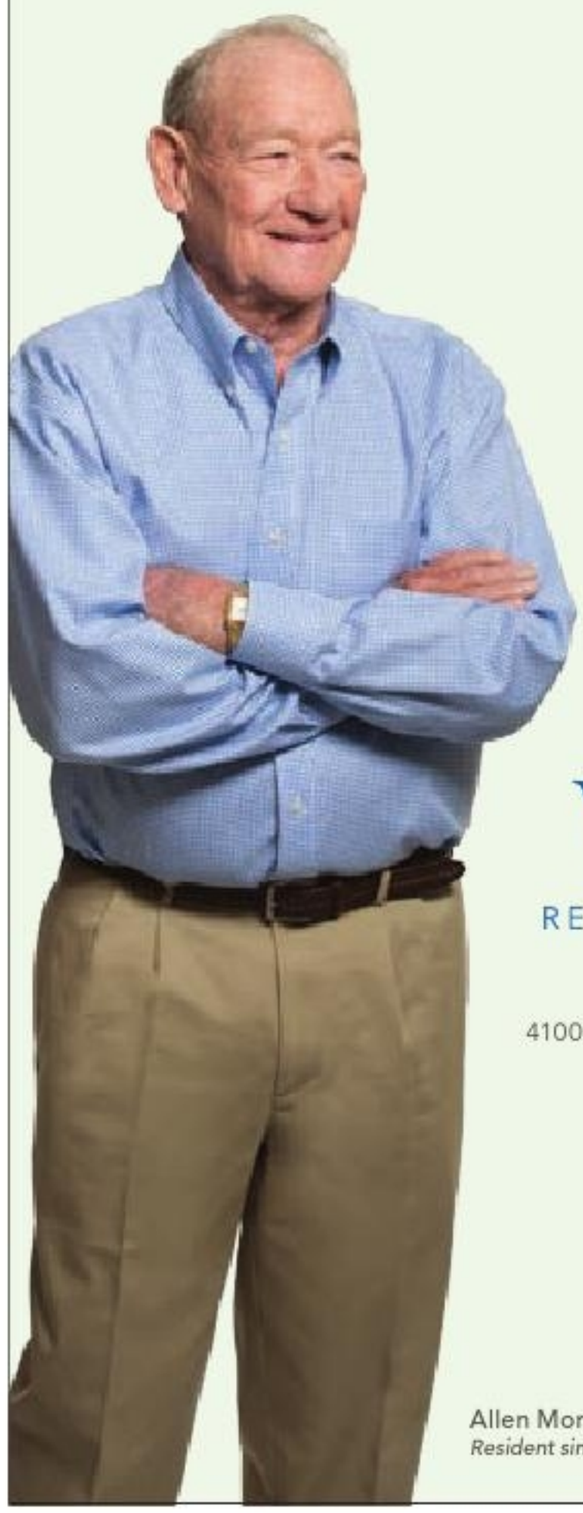

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Partying With the Monkey God

An ancient chant releases the giggles and helps the singers find the real person within

By Jennifer Chapis

It's not every sunny day in May that you witness adults dancing with a costume monkey tail pinned onto their butt. Yet this was the scene at a merrymaking event that I recently hosted.

Our gathering was a love fest, in the purest sense. Imagine sober strangers skipping like silly kids. Picture platonic friends embracing in lengthy hugs.

"I love everyone here!" shouted Karen Treinen, a local yoga teacher glowing with bliss.

The closest any of us came to a cocktail was lemon water. So how did fifteen people grow so excited to be alive?

We chanted the Hanuman Chalisa.

Jaya hanumana gyana guna sagara, jaya kapisa tihun loka ujagara . . .

Sitting cross-legged on pink floor pillows, we read aloud this forty-verse poem written in Awadhi (an Eastern Hindi language) by sixteenth-century Indian philosopher Goswami Tulsidas. Depending on how fast you go, it takes six to ten minutes to sing this long hymn just once. We sang for nearly fourteen hours!

Why would any sane person voluntarily sing the same song, over and over, until 3 a.m.?

Chanting the Hanuman Chalisa is said to remove obstacles, misunderstanding, pain and fear, as well as grant wisdom, strength and divine knowledge.

An adored Hindu deity in the form of a monkey, Hanuman is associated with selfless service, perseverance and strength. Depicted in Indian folklore as an icon of devotion, Hanuman's unwavering commitment to his lord, Rama, was symbolic of the dedication of the individual soul to the higher soul on the path to enlightenment.

Chanting (kirtan) is traditionally an Indian devotional practice, but our gathering was not religious. Christians and Jews alike participated, as did those without religion. Spirituality itself—connection to the divine grace within us all—inspired us to cheerily chant our brains out.

We didn't sing straight through. People came and went throughout the day. And on brief breaks we snacked on quinoa-stuffed endive and stretched by doing sun salutations. Still, our agenda was well-defined: Chant the Chalisa 108 times.

Among countless reasons why 108 is considered auspicious, it is said that the number one represents oneness or higher truth; zero signifies prayer as well as pure emptiness in spiritual practice; and eight stands for eternity. Furthermore, 108 energy lines intersect to form the heart chakra, an energy center in the chest that governs love and compassion.

The Chalisa is a popular chant partly because it's about victory and celebration. The mythical story states that, as a mischievous child, almighty Hanuman was cursed not to remember his power. We sing to Hanuman to remind him of who he is, and therefore we recognize unseen gifts within ourselves.

Rama duta atulita bala dhama, anjani putra pawanasuta nama . . .

"Simply by being present with the lyrics, you feel self-confidence replace self-consciousness," explained Misty Hall, a 33-year-old pink-haired singer who plays the harmonium and ukulele with a Wilmington kirtan group called Hanuman's Devotion in A Minor. "Chanting relaxes the ego and gives you a chance to meet the real you inside yourself."

Mahabeera bikrama bajarangi, kumati nivara sumati ke sangi . . .

I've traveled to Rishikesh and Haridwar, holy Indian cities where the magic of harmonium music spilled into dusty streets, but I originally discovered kirtan in New York. My Brooklyn neighbors were kirtan artists and friends with Krishna Das, the musician who brought chanting to the West. Our weekly musical mantras were part of a meditation practice that transformed my happiness.

Three years after moving to Wilmington, I am grateful to be part of yet another growing spiritual community. The Hanuman party was part of that communal burgeoning.

With our energy collectively rising and falling, sometimes we sang softly, and sometimes we chanted rowdily, falling into wild rhythms. We listened to local musician Jess Watson strum guitar chords and tap tabla drums. Some of us shook wooden rattles and stomped our feet, the sound of Indian-style bell-anklets ringing in our ears. And some just sang along.

"Chanting the Chalisa as few as five times is enough to feel more open and loving. Reciting it 108 times made me want to wrap every person and organism on the planet inside the wings of my heart," said Alan Walshe, a distributor of crystals, who at around midnight found himself channeling an abundance of physical energy into headstands.

Unleashing your own giggle-inducing bliss can be a life-changing experience. Even now, months later, remembering our many voices as one fills me with gratitude.

Jo sata bara patha kara ko-ee, chutahi bandi maha sukha ho-ee . . .

"When we see the beauty of our own being we are seeing the beauty of the Being that is the One of which we are all a part. And when we turn towards that One, love is the natural reaction of the heart," wrote Krishna Das. This unifying practice connects us to other people by experiencing a deeper love within the self.

Glancing around the room that day, I saw my friend Ashley outlined in light. As an energy healer, it's not uncommon for me to see energy. But this was different. After hours with the verses, something surprising happened. With eyes closed, I witnessed yellow light rise from her harp. I saw the song touch each of us.

Jokingly called the "queen of love" by friends and clients, Jennifer Chapis is a healer, teacher and writer in Wilmington. Find her at www.AllLoveHealing.com.

The Brilliant Biscuit-Maker

Under the talented guidance of Chef Marnie Williamson, the bar has been raised at Ocean Isle's beloved restaurant

By Jason Frye

Like any good

story should, it all started with making biscuits.

See little Marnie Williamson, 5 years old, perched on a stool in her grandmamma's kitchen. She turns the crank handle of an old tin flour sifter like it's some sort of culinary hurdy-gurdy. A cloud of flour falls from the sifter, forming a small white pyramid on the wax paper below. Grandmamma watches.

When there's flour enough, Grandmamma transfers it to a bowl and cuts in pats of butter, adds milk a splash at a time. She takes Marnie's hands in hers, guiding them through the still-forming dough, teaching texture the only way it can be taught: through touch.

She cautions her granddaughter, saying they must be mindful of the dough; to be heavy-handed will surely toughen the biscuits.

Next a flour-strewn countertop and the dough rolled with what seems to Marnie an ancient rolling pin.

"We punched out the biscuits with a juice glass, one with a perfectly biscuit-sized rim," Williamson, now chef at The Isles Restaurant in Ocean Isle Beach, says. "Every time I make biscuits I find myself reaching for a glass in lieu of a biscuit cutter. And when I put the pan in the oven, I'm faced with the same important decision I had as a kid: Will I eat my warm biscuit with honey or molasses?"

Like so many chefs, Williamson's first bright food memory is of family; making biscuits with her grandmamma, then graduating to experimenting — in that same kitchen — with recipes of her own design.

"I got a little bored with the same recipes. I started to rebel against measuring spoons and standard procedures and wanted to do my own thing," she says. When Grandmamma would leave on an errand, into the kitchen Marnie would run, and her grandfather, told to keep an eye on her and ensure she didn't go "messing" in the kitchen, turned a blind eye. "Disobedience wasn't tolerated, but somehow [Grandmamma] understood my inability to withstand the lures of the kitchen."

By the time Williamson was off to boarding school, she'd begun experiments with cooking methods, ingredients, flavors and dishes that weren't so close to home.

"My best friend was from Korea and I always looked forward to her bringing a jar of her mother's kimchi back to school after Christmas break. Another friend from India would share papadam and pickles and chutney whenever her care packages would arrive from home," says Williamson.

"Those experiences not only shaped my palate but challenged me to create and to recreate that which inspired me."

Despite this passion for food, culinary school wasn't in her future. She moved to Charleston, South Carolina, in the early 1990s, before it was the food Mecca of today, to attend College of Charleston and study psychology. Her choice of Charleston over other schools was "more for the food scene than anything else," she admits, and while there, she had some transformative meals. Louis's, Anson, Le Midi, Carolina's and Magnolias were among her favorites, though it was one particular dish that made a mark on her and her career.

"My first time eating Louis Osteen's shrimp and grits, I vowed to myself that one day mine would be as delightful."

In 2014, Williamson's shrimp and grits won a local food competition — Chilled and Grilled — for best entrée.

"I owe that to Mr. Osteen for inspiring me over twenty years ago."

That inspiration is seen today in her menu at The Isles Restaurant. There, the food is decidedly coastal, drawing flavors and traditions from the low country and the American South, but also exploring other flavors. Some — Italian, French — are more familiar, while others, especially those drawing from a pan-Asian palate, are downright exotic in a corner of the world where fried fish is the norm.

"We aspire for every guest to identify something on the menu that excites them, whether that be the adventurous guest who seeks a novel experience to the guest who is comforted by time-honored classics prepared properly," Williamson says. "I believe we are closer than ever to accomplishing this goal but aim to progressively raise the bar."

Williamson doesn't have to serve great food at The Isles Restaurant (the view

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES STEFIUK

alone would keep the dining room full in summer), but she does all the same. At first glance, the menu looks like what you'd expect — crab dip and calamari, crab cakes and fresh catch, stuffed flounder, a low country boil, steak — but a deeper look reveals the care and planning Williamson put into writing these recipes. When plates begin to arrive at the table and you can finally see and smell what you've ordered, the work in executing these dishes becomes apparent. And from the first bite to the last, it's clear that Marnie Williamson belongs in the kitchen.

Under her eye, The Isles Restaurant has progressively raised the bar. For the last three years, she's been in charge of the kitchen, but for five years prior, she was the general manager, so she knows both sides of the dining room and guest experience. Even with that experience, she says it took a lot of courage for her to actually take the step and run the kitchen.

"My biggest concern was that I wouldn't be taken seriously, as I wasn't classically trained and didn't earn a culinary degree. I'm a clinical psychologist who just happens to be a very good cook. I took a leap of faith and found that the evidence of my culinary worth wasn't a degree on the wall, but the fact that plates left the kitchen full and came back empty.

Marnie's Smoked Wahoo Dip

Brining fish for smoking

Take 1/4 cup brown sugar, 1/2 cup kosher salt and a palm full of crushed bay leaves and add to 1 quart of hot water. Dissolve both sugar and salt in the water completely. Place brine in the refrigerator. When cool, add the wahoo fillets (or mahi), making sure the fish is completely covered by brine. Allow the fish to rest in the brine for at least 6 hours or overnight in the refrigerator.

Drying fish for smoking

Remove the fish from the brine and rinse each piece well under cool water and place in a colander to drain. Thoroughly dry each piece of fish with paper towels, removing as much dampness from the fish as possible. Place the fish on a rack that allows air to reach both sides of the fish. Place the rack in the refrigerator for 4-6 hours, uncovered. The fish is ready to smoke when a "pellicle" has formed on the outside of the fish. The "pellicle" looks like a toughened, slightly shiny skin on the outside of the fish that feels sticky to the touch. It is what gives the smoke a surface to adhere to on the fish during the smoking process. If pellicle has not formed, place the fish in an oven on the lowest setting (200 degrees or less). Leave oven door open. Allow fish to finish "drying" for 15 minutes or so. You do not want the fish to cook yet, so check frequently. Also, only use oven drying technique immediately before smoking the fish.

Smoking the fish

You will need a stovetop smoker. You can either buy one for under $40 (e.g., Camerons brand) or make one from a roasting pan with a flat rack placed inside and covered with a weighted down lid or sealed tightly with layers of heavy duty aluminum foil. (Completely line the bottom of the smoker and the rack with foil to make cleanup easier.) Place a few handfuls of presoaked wood chips (soaked at least 15 minutes) into the bottom of the smoker. I use a mix of 1/2 alder wood and 1/2 cherry wood chips. Just do not use mesquite, as it will overpower the fish. Place the fish on the rack and into the pan. Leave a slight gap between the lid and pan initially and place pan over high heat. When you start to see smoke, reduce the heat to medium-high and completely seal the lid. Smoking times will vary, but generally the fish will be done in 30-45 minutes. After the first 30 minutes, check every 5 to 10 minutes. You will be looking for an orangish salmon color to appear on the fish, and for the fish to be firm to the touch. You will also need to ensure that the internal temperature of the fish has reached 160 degrees. If it is not 160 but is close, you may finish in the oven, leaving the smoker pan sealed. Once smoking is complete, cool fish in a single layer on a rack in the refrigerator until completely chilled.

Making the Dip

1 pound of smoked wahoo (mahi-mahi may be substituted)
1/4 cup sour cream
1/2 cup cream cheese
2 tbsp mayonnaise (I prefer Duke's brand)
1 1/2 tsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 1/2 tsp freshly squeezed lime juice
1 tsp Tabasco (or to taste)
2 tbsp finely minced onion
2 tbsp finely minced celery
Salt and pepper to taste

After smoked wahoo has cooled, gently shred the smoked fish with your hands and set aside. In a food processor, combine sour cream, cream cheese and mayonnaise, lemon and lime juices, and Tabasco. Process until the mixture is smooth and all wet ingredients are well blended. Add the shredded smoked fish, minced celery and onion to the processor and gently pulse the processor in several 2–3 second bursts, remembering to scrape the sides of the processor bowl to make sure all ingredients are incorporated. Be cautious to not over-process the fish. You are looking for small flakes of fish to remain suspended in the mixture, which should resemble a thick spread similar to pâté. Add salt and pepper to taste. If the mixture is not as "smokey" as you would like, a drop or two of a quality liquid smoke may be added. Chill for a minimum of three hours. Serve with club crackers, red onion slices, lemon wedges and Tabasco.

The Isles Restaurant is located at 417 West Second Street, Ocean Isle Beach. Open Sunday through Thursday from 11:30 a.m. – 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday from from 11:30 a.m. – 10 p.m. For information, visit www.islesrestaurant.com or call (910) 575-5988.

Jason Frye is a travel writer and author of Moon North Carolina *and* Moon NC Coast. *This summer, he's traveling with an armful of books, including* The Wonder of All Things *by Jason Mott,* Contact *by Carl Sagan,* Death Valley in '49 *by William Lewis Manly and the latest from Stephen King. Keep up with his travels at tarheeltourist.com.*

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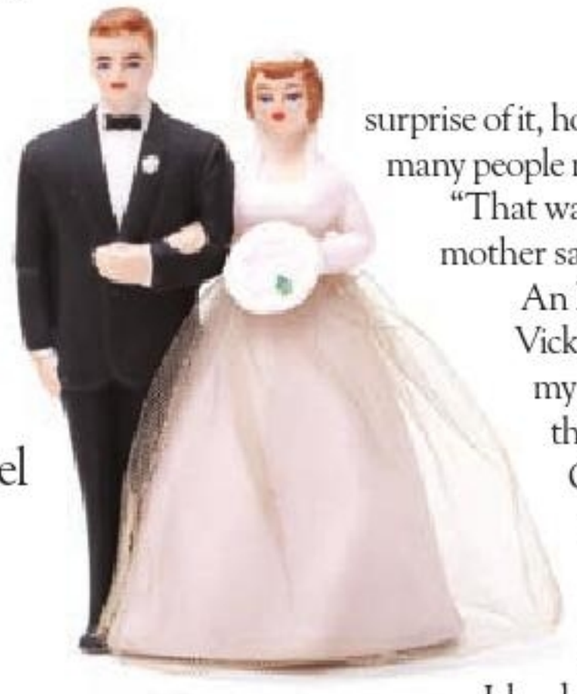

By Wiley Cash

November 18, 1922, marked not only the end of Marcel Proust's life at the age of 51, it also marked the end of his twelve-year struggle to transmogrify his life into fiction; this he did in a seven-volume behemoth of a novel titled *In Search of Lost Time*. While T. S. Eliot's lovable loser J. Alfred Prufrock measures his life in coffee spoons, Proust's autobiographical narrator measures his life in pages, and there are literally thousands of them.

Can you imagine attempting to put one year of your life on the page? Can you visualize the scope of a year's worth of minutiae? Do you possess the vocabulary necessary to portray the wonder, fear and beauty a year brings? Can you sustain a narrative that encompasses the richness of one year of life? Now, multiply that difficulty by 50.

To quote Prufrock, who has his own issues when conceptualizing life, "How do I presume?" The better question is, "Where do I begin?"

Proust's narrator begins with a madeleine cookie that he eats as a young child. Upon recalling the taste of this treat, he is able to recast the flow of his life in a series of memories, impressions, stories, faces, fragments and ideas. In other words, it all comes back to him with the remembrance of one thing: fifty years of life conjured by a cookie.

My parents have shared fifty years of their lives together as a married couple, and I'm certain that during that time they've eaten some memorable cookies, but getting them to shake off the layers of memory and tell stories about their lives is akin to scraping a house's exterior before you're able to paint it. There are things they don't remember; things they haven't thought of in years; things they don't believe others would be interested in hearing about. But the older they get, the more my siblings and I want to hear these things.

In early June my older sister, younger brother and I celebrated my parents' fiftieth wedding anniversary with a surprise party in their honor at the Brunswick Inn in Southport, North Carolina. The list of attendees was extensive: my mother's childhood best friend; my father's cousins from Cleveland County; a couple named Vickie and Oren who double-dated with my parents in the 1960s; dozens of newer and no less dear friends my parents have made in the seventeen years they've lived on the coast. It was an incredible evening of recounting stories, catching up with old friends, and meeting new people I'd heard my parents talk about over the years.

As the guests began to leave around dusk, we began the clean-up effort while my parents settled into the room we'd reserved for them. Along with Vickie and Oren, my parents and my wife and daughter and I had the inn to ourselves for the night. Later, with my sister preparing to head back to my parents' house to keep an eye on their dog and my brother and sister-in-law returning home to Wilmington, we all stood in the inn's foyer and talked about the party: the surprise of it, how nice it was to see everyone, how much it meant that so many people made the trip to the coast.

"That was the nicest thing anyone's ever done for me," my mother said.

An hour or so later — night fully fallen, our daughter asleep, Vickie and Oren in their room, the house otherwise empty — my parents and my wife and I sat on the second-story porch that overlooks the Southport harbor. In the distance, the Oak Island Lighthouse glowed brightly at the far eastern end of Caswell Beach, its light rotating across the water and through the trees in perfect increments.

We talked about how the lighthouse's beam is visible from the bridge that connects the mainland to Oak Island, where my parents live, and I reminded my mother that when they moved to the beach in 1998, she told me that I would always know I was on my way home when I saw the light from the Oak Island Lighthouse.

Our conversation shifted from my parents' relocation to the coast to the many other places they've lived during their fifty years together: San Antonio during my father's basic training; Germany during the Vietnam War; Shelby in an apartment above my grandparents' home; Fayetteville, where I was born after my father was transferred; Gastonia, where my sister, brother and I were raised until the three of us left for college and all settled together in Asheville.

After a lull in the conversation, my mother turned and looked at me and my wife. "You know, July 6 isn't our real anniversary," she said.

"We got married a few months before that," my father said. "It was a secret. No one ever knew."

My mother gestured toward the porch door behind her. "Vickie and Oren knew," she said, smiling. "They were our witnesses."

"Why did you keep it a secret?" my wife asked.

"We didn't want our families to know we'd gotten married before our wedding day. We drove down to Clover, South Carolina. We were afraid he'd be drafted," my mother said. "And we knew I couldn't go with him unless we were married."

While the light from the Oak Island Lighthouse rolled across the face of the water in the harbor, the four of us talked about how funny it must've felt for my parents to get married twice and the fact that they had marriage licenses from both North and South Carolina. My parents had told this story to my siblings and me years earlier, but I'd forgotten it, and as I watched the lighthouse's light illuminate the trees and flash across our faces I imagined that on each pass the light removed another layer of time, of memory, of the mystery of both.

Fifty years ago, my parents were married twice, and then they gave birth to my sister, my brother, and me, and now I was here with them and my wife, our daughter asleep only feet away, Vickie and Oren — who a half-century ago witnessed things I've only heard about — asleep just down the hall, a madeleine cookie dissolving on the tongue as time dissolves around it, a lighthouse spinning in the distance, shining its light over the fifty years it took to get to this moment, this night, this memory.

Wiley Cash is a New York Times *best-selling author whose second novel,* This Dark Road to Mercy, *was released last year. His summer reading agenda includes Jami Attenberg's* Saint Mazie *and Craig Childs'* Apocalyptic Planet.

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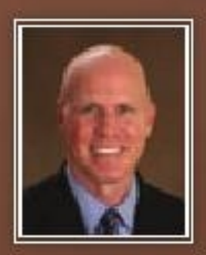

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Beautiful Waders

The monarchs of our brackish waters, barometers of coastal health

By Susan Campbell

Everyone knows that owls and nightjars (think whip-poor-wills) hawk for food while the rest of the world sleeps, but when it comes to nocturnal birds, far fewer people conjure up images of night-herons. Here in North Carolina, we have two species: yellow-crowned and black-crowned. Although both breed in the state, only black-crowned night-herons can be found along the coast year-round. They tend not to wander far from the brackish waters that supply the fish, crustaceans, invertebrates and amphibians they count on for survival.

Black-crowned night-herons are handsome waders — stocky gray birds with thick bills, black backs and crowns, long white head plumes and intense red eyes. Unlike, say, the great blue heron, these night-herons have short legs and necks. During daylight hours, they can be spotted snoozing among vegetation along creeks, ponds or marshy areas. Surprisingly, night-herons can be quite approachable on their daytime perches. They often use roost sites that are occupied by egrets, herons, ibises and other day-active birds.

At dusk, black-crowned night-herons appear out of nowhere and buoyantly fly off to feeding areas. Their profile is unmistakable: long rounded wings, neck held close to the back and feet barely extending beyond the tail. Often these birds sound off with raspy, squawking calls. Although they are social birds, individuals tend to forage alone — grabbing (not stabbing) their food with their bill. By foraging at night, competition with other wading birds is reduced.

Breeding season brings black-crowneds to areas free from predators, such as islands or over water. Males select a good spot and then begin their courtship displays: bowing and raising their head plumes. Nests vary from loose collections of sticks to elaborate platforms of woody vegetation. Several pairs may nest in the same tree; they colonize with other wading birds. Both adults share the duties of incubation and feeding. As they switch places, they greet one another by calling and raising their head feathers.

It has also been found that adult black-crowneds will tend any young in their nest, even if they are strangers.

For birds of their size, night-herons fledge extremely early — at about one month, which is several weeks before they can actually fly. Young birds look significantly different from their parents. For at least the first year they are mainly brown. White spots on their wings and brown streaking on their white breast gives them the look of an American bittern.

Black-crowned night-heron populations have a world-wide distribution, but they have been quite susceptible to wetland habitat loss in recent decades. They are frequently considered indicators of environmental health given their place at the top of the food chain. Their size and colonial nature make them easy to monitor. Night-herons do not tolerate disturbance such as traffic, thus they are very useful in detecting deterioration of urban environments. Hopefully the protected habitat along the North Carolina coast will give black-crowned night-herons ample room not only to survive, but thrive for years to come.

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos. She can be contacted by email at susan@ncaves.com.

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Confessions of a Hometown Tourist

Even just out of your backdoor, there is no guilt – or calories – on summer vacation

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPH BY VIRGINIA HOLMAN

I've lived on Carolina Beach for eleven years now, and I marvel daily at my good fortune. I watch dawn pink the sky over the ocean and blazing sunsets along the Cape Fear River. There are two state parks with miles of hiking trails. And we have a true community, full of good neighbors. That's because Carolina Beach is really two towns. The town most people see is the "tourist town" — the long stretch of shops and condos and vacation rentals that run along the shore. However, behind the main strip, tucked away from the hubbub, is the year-round beating heart of our town. It's a small paradise where kids ride their bikes to the local elementary school and stroll to the nearby sports fields. Parents and old-timers still sit on their front decks in the evenings and gossip. Neighbors frequent town hall meetings and speak their minds. And an old-school ice cream truck cruises the streets all summer long, broadcasting its eclectic music-box playlist: "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" is often followed by "Für Elise."

Despite the summer traffic and holiday crowds, we locals love the tourists. If locals are the beating heart of the town, tourists are the lifeblood. Families set up on the beach with truckloads of gear. Dads chase after their kids with bottles of sunscreen, moms pour water over sandy little hands before lunch. Once, when the surf was too rough for swimming, some ingenious beachfront vacationers filled an inflatable kiddie pool right on the beach, then staked their cabana over it. The children were safe and happy on the beach for hours — no small feat on a "red flag" day.

I sometimes feel a little guilty that I get to live here year-round. People scrimp and save their money all year for a family week at the beach. A few tourists have never before seen the ocean, but many have visited for decades. These folks often return to the same small motels and cottages each summer, fish the same piers, and gather on the porch to share a low-country boil. Part vacation, part rite.

Each summer, I like to take a day or two and pretend I'm a tourist rather than a local. I'll wake up before sunrise and head down to the beach with a cup of coffee to watch the sun rise. The joggers are the first to emerge. A little later, a parent will emerge with a young child or two, the kids toddling down the beach gathering seashells and splashing at the water's edge. The Pleasure Island Turtle Project patrol motors past, scanning the beach for turtle tracks that lead to a nest. Soon after, the lifeguards arrive, stake a green, yellow or red flag to alert swimmers of the conditions, and begin the day's watch.

Then I like to grab some doughnuts. Britt's on the boardwalk is my personal favorite — and judging from the lines, other tourists feel that way too. Britt's does one thing only: the classic glazed doughnut. It's perfection. Newcomer Wake N Bake Donuts is the popular new kid in town. If you're looking for variety, Wake N Bake has nearly any breakfast pastry you can imagine, including cherry fritters the size of your head.

Once my blood sugar level is at cruising altitude, I'll head down to the North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher. One, I love air-conditioning on a hot summer's day, and two, I love watching the animals. Who can resist Luna the albino alligator? Or Lorikeet Landing? Or holding a hermit crab in the touch tank? Sometimes, you can even watch young rescued loggerhead babies prior to release. Perhaps the most magical corner is the jellyfish tank. The aquariums are in a dim corner. The jellies swim in dark water and are lit in such a way that they glow. Long tentacles pulse and drift hypnotically. Their lure is irresistible. Invariably, a child will stroll by and place her hand on the tank, trying to pet these elegant creatures. After that, I always pause at a fascinating yet sobering photo display of hurricanes along the North Carolina coast, a potent reminder of nature's wrath.

After a morning at the aquarium, I'll put on my wide-brimmed hat and walk the beach until I reach Carolina Beach's newly renovated boardwalk. This wide wooden walkway sports massive porch swings overlooking the ocean, outdoor showers, and a covered gazebo. It's the perfect spot to cool your heels with your sweetie before heading to Hurricane Alley's for lunch on their oceanfront deck. I'll also get a quarter-pound of fudge at the Fudgeboat because there are no calories on vacation.

Perhaps my favorite time of day in Carolina Beach is right before sunset. That's when the charter boats return to the yacht basin and the tourists post their catch. I particularly enjoy watching the tired, happy people disembark from a day fishing the Gulfstream aboard the *Winner Queen*, which often takes out large groups such as families and Marines. There's nothing quite like it, and it's fun to shoot the breeze with folks while they wait to carry home their catch.

I'm always torn at the end of my hometown tourist experience. Sometimes I head over to the Surfhouse Café for a healthy, upscale meal, or I'll visit the Gulfstream restaurant to get some of the best down-home cooking on the island. I never get dessert, because once the sun sets, and dusk settles over the town, I head over to the Carolina Beach Boardwalk Amusement Park to watch the lights on the carnival rides (and eat my fill of cotton candy). The view from atop the double Ferris wheel is pure magic. If I time my ride at civil twilight, I can still see dusky clouds over the ocean, stars twinkling overhead, and other happy tourists who wish summer could go on forever.

Author Virginia Holman teaches in the creative writing department at UNC Wilmington and occasionally guides with Kayak Carolina. Her summer reading recommendation: Jeffery Renard Allen's brilliant and beautiful Song of the Shank.

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To Forget Who You Are

For my Mother

To forget who you are
is one way to vanish

To go underground
is another way

To go underground
and sleep as ash
with the roots

Or to sleep as air
inside the sound
of the sky

To appear as a magpie
or an eagle

Or coltsfoot along the edge
of the quarry

To assume the shape of shadows
that swim in the tall
road-side grass

below a stand of Elms

— *Malena Mörling*

Sizzling Summer Fiction Issue

Milky Thighs and Shady Snakes

A romance that slithers into your heart

Fiction by Celia Rivenbark

Illustration by Harry Blair

Hornsby Pelletier hoped like hell that nobody would ever figure out that he slept with the giant reticulated python, Freddy, every night after he set the alarms at the serpentarium. Settle down. No funny business. Hornsby Pelletier was from an upstanding family of the Lower Cape Fear. OK, Burgaw, but not the kind of people that would do questionable things with big snakes after dark.

That was the problem with everybody these days. Smutty minds. He heard it every day when he swept up the gum wrappers and tourist detritus that littered the sidewalk and lobby.

The middle school boys were the worst offenders. They knocked on the Plexiglas cages that housed Hornsby Pelletier's closest friends even though the

sign clearly said not to do that. Then, they breathed heavy on the glass. Their breath was always sugar-scented from too much Kilwins fudge and they'd make a great sugary fog on the glass just so they could write four-letter words your mama would find flat shameful. Hilarious. Finally, inevitably, the tragically underpaid North Carolina public school teacher who had the misfortune to escort them for the day would take notice and make them wipe away the obscene message with their shirtsleeves all the while thinking "Mo-rons."

It was all Hornsby Pelletier could do to keep from swatting these rule-breakers "accidentally on purpose" with his push broom as he silently walked in his serpentarium-issued coveralls behind another class field trip.

So why did he secretly sleep with the giant python? That was simple. The boas and iguanas and crocs and vipers were friends to him. Not in some stupid movie way like *Night at the Museum*. No dioramas were going to come to life with Teddy Roosevelt making out with Sacajawea. This was real life, not fantasy. It was really very simple. Just a man and his companions amiably passing a night together. One of them had a Kindle. It wasn't so bad. The only thing that made him a trifle sad was that he could never have a beer with his "friends" because they didn't technically have hands.

Just once, he'd like to amble over to the Barbary Coast with a couple of the angrier-looking cottonmouths draped over his shoulders and ask the loudest asshole at the bar: "What chu lookin' at?"

Man, oh, man, that would be something. It had occurred to Hornsby Pelletier that he liked reptiles a damn sight more than people. Well, most people. The mysterious blonde who came to the serpentarium every single Tuesday afternoon and simply stared at the python for exactly fifty-five minutes before leaving . . . she would definitely be worth getting to know.

He loved to watch her watch that giant snake. She never even seemed to notice any of the other reptiles. When the notoriously gregarious emerald tree boa, Saffo, sidled over, she appeared not to even notice. Amazing. No one could resist Saffo's famous charms. He was Mr. Personality and this woman couldn't have cared less. This just made her even more mysterious in Hornsby Pelletier's eyes, and, therefore, more desirable than a downtown parking space with ninety minutes left on the meter.

One day, the mystery blonde stayed a full sixty minutes before sighing her usual deep sigh, flipping her thick hair to one shoulder and, in a move so fluid it didn't even seem humanly possible, securing it with a rubber band. Such grace! It made Hornsby Pelletier's jaw drop. His heart fell along with it. No one like that would look twice at him. Although, they did share a mutual fascination for the python. Maybe if he approached and told her he slept with it every night, she would find him interesting. Maybe she would run away screaming. Yep. Most likely it would be Door No. 2 for Hornsby Pelletier.

Everything about the mysterious blonde was captivating. She was the only person, besides himself, who understood the python. Oh, sure, everybody had loved the python when there was a big story in the paper about how it got sick after Ricky Meeks' transistor radio somehow fell into the cage and the python ate it whole, but the town rallied. Wilmington was like that. Ricky got a new radio and the vet made a house call to make sure things, well, passed through without incident, rather like a caravan of bikers coming through town every May on its way to Myrtle Beach.

Every May they *vrrrroooooomed* down Market Street, causing the windows in the old mansions downtown to shake near-bout loose. Hornsby Pelletier, not normally a praying man, lifted a plea to the Almighty that they would just keep on goin'. And they always did. Right over the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge and past the Battleship *North Carolina* and, not that they'd know it, the best sweet peaches on earth at Eagle Island Produce. Good riddance.

Hornsby Pelletier was so caught up in his peach reverie that he almost didn't realize it was time to lock up and set the alarms. Or that, and he couldn't quite believe his eyes, the mysterious blonde was still standing in front of the python's habitat. They liked to call it a habitat, but he still slipped up and said "cage" sometimes because, hell, he was from Burgaw and there was a very low tolerance for P.C. bullshit among the country folk. Sometimes, the locals even laid it on a little heavy just for laughs when Yankees came to town. One time, his kid sister had captivated a gaggle of New Jersey tourists with a completely fictitious account of how her daddy was also her uncle, cousin and brother. It was fun to mess with them like that. And easy as shootin' fish in a barrel of moonshine.

Hornsby Pelletier double-checked the bird clock on the wall. Two minutes past the sparrow's ass (closing time) and the mysterious blonde showed no signs of budging. He approached her with something like reverence. More of reverence's second cousin twice removed. He was shaking a little, which was embarrassing. He was, after all, not a bad-looking sort. Old girlfriends had told him he had "potential." He was fit, had a stubble that some women found appealing and had eyes "just like Bradley Cooper's," according to his most recent girlfriend. The one who was local but tried to talk like a Valley girl and, like, totally left when he said he slept with the python every night.

The truth was, if he wasn't wearing coveralls with HORNSBY PELLETIER on the little stitched-on upper left pocket, he might have been mistaken for one of the "movie people" in town.

And, for the first time, Hornsby Pelletier wondered if that's what brought the mysterious blonde to Wilmington. She was exotic, like Isabella Rossellini in *Blue Velvet*. But, of course, younger and hotter.

She was surprisingly vulnerable-looking, like Julia Roberts in *Sleeping with the Enemy*.

She was athletic, like Robert Downey Jr.'s stunt double in *Iron Man*. Yessiree bob, like his Burgaw grandpappy used to say, she was the total package.

"Can I help you, ma'am?" he asked, surprised to hear his voice sound strong as fresh-roasted beans from Port City Java.

"No," she said, somewhat sadly. "I am afraid that no one can help me."

"What is it you need, ma'am, er, miss, er . . ." Hornsby Pelletier had a perfectly awful talent for getting that one wrong.

"Oh, it's Miss," she said, extending a perfectly manicured hand. Well, actually just the nail part was manicured but you get the idea. "I'm an unmarried woman who is living here temporarily, and I have always dreamed of sleeping with a python."

Hornsby Pelletier's face must've looked odd right about then because she hastened to say: "No, not like THAT! Just sleep with him, feel his oddly dry skin rub against my milky thighs."

"You had me at oddly dry," said Hornsby Pelletier. Damn. This was going way better than he could've imagined.

"Well, it just so happens that I can help you with that! I not only work

here but I'm the night watchman, too. To tell the truth, I like to sleep with Freddy myself. My thighs aren't particularly milky, but he does make a really fine neck pillow if you arrange him just right."

"Wow. This is amazing. All this time I thought you were just a surprisingly handsome broom-pusher with no real ambitions beyond chasing those mouth-breathing middle-schoolers out of here but now, I discover that you and I share this kinky fantasy!"

"Oh, no, ma'am," Hornsby Pelletier said, instantly regretting it.

"It's Miss, I told you." She was suddenly chilly. Her stare was cold-blooded and reminded him of the way Trixie, the black mamba, sometimes looked at him if he didn't give her an extra frozen white mouse now and again.

"I mean to say, it's not kinky. I look at Freddy as my friend. If you have something else in mind, well, you may need to go to Leland."

"What? Cross the bridge? What do I look like, a biker?"

"No, all I meant was that you seem nice. And there's the whole hair-tie thing you do . . . but I'm into human, er, consortium, not reptile hanky-panky. And I'd like to hope that you are the same."

"OK," she said, squinting at his name tag, "Hornsby Pelletier, I think we've gotten off on the wrong foot. I mean, usually I start with my left foot and then my right and then my left foot again and then my right foot again and then . . ."

Crap on a cracker, this woman was a nut job, Hornsby thought. Time to get her out of here.

It had been too much to hope that his true love was a beautiful, mysterious fellow python enthusiast with exceedingly nimble fingers and movie-star hair.

Yes, he'd just have to settle for an ordinary woman. A sturdy girl from Burgaw, or maybe even Wallace, who would just have to understand that, when darkness fell, he would prefer to rest his weary head on a coiled-up python that could, in truth, turn on him and kill him in a matter of seconds if he took a notion.

And then it hit Hornsby Pelletier. It hit him like something that hits things a lot. Like a hammer hits a nail. Or a car hits the one in front of it when the Wrightsville Beach drawbridge finally opens.

No, no. Hornsby Pelletier needed a sturdy local woman, someone sweeter than a box of Britt's doughnuts. The normal glazed kind, not the stupid maple-bacon-Sriracha-kimchi ones they sold the tourists. He needed a woman who understood that he had a sense of adventure. It was precisely because the python could so easily kill him that he wanted to spend the night with it. He was a danger junkie! Which was kind of cool.

Sadly, while Hornsby Pelletier made a move to escort his dream girl out of the museum, she made him an offer he couldn't refuse.

"Hornsby Pelletier," she purred. "Why don't we get out of here and get a drink? Talk about our mutual fascination with pythons and Pythagoras!"

"Sorry, what?"

"Oh, sorry. I'm really into alliteration. Suddenly, seemingly, shamelessly into it!"

This broad was tiresome with a capital T. But he was thirsty and there was a BOGO on wine at Elijah's on Wednesday nights. What the hell?

She wasn't kidding about the alliteration thing. Penelope ("Penny") Poundsaver was from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and she talked till two-twenty-two. A.M. When decent people are sound asleep with their snakes, thought a thoroughly bored Hornsby Pelletier. Which reminded him. Did he actually lock up earlier? He couldn't honestly recall.

"I have to go," he said, finally.

"Party pooper," said Penny Poundsaver, pouting prettily.

Craptastic. Now HE was even thinking in alliteration.

He walked her back to the Hilton, dodging some drunk Marines, some frat boys from UNCW headed up to Jefferson Davis' statue to put a PBR can in his outstretched verdigris hand (again) and pausing to drop a few coins into six different saxophone players' cases. Wilmington had buskers now.

"Buskers boost business!" chirped Penny Poundsaver.

He hot-footed down the Riverwalk back to the serpentarium where, shit, the door was wide open and the biggest cage, er, habitat was empty.

A note on the glass told all:

PUNKED BY PENNY POUNDSAVER! She had a cohort, which made her the hort, he supposed. While she distracted him with her womanly wiles, the cohort had freed Freddy.

"He's gone, Hornsby," said a soft voice from behind him. Was his ass talking to him? No, it was Samantha, the ticket-taker he had worked with for nearly three years now. He liked Samantha but she was an enigma wrapped in a riddle to him. OK, not really. They just worked different shifts. But there she stood. She had been hiding in the shadows like a Gaboon viper in leaf litter. He'd never seen Samantha the ticket-taker out of her coveralls and, well, she looked way better without that weird crotch bulge that happens when a girl wears ill-fitting pants.

"You're thinking I look better in normal clothes, aren't you?"

"Yes, and also wondering why you are the only person who has ever called me just by my first name."

"It's because I love you," said Samantha. "I've always loved you, Hornsby, but short of making like a baboon and showing you my nether parts, I could never get your attention. I knew that bitch was up to something. I followed her cohort and I got Freddy back. You see, I know you sleep with him. I've known it for years. Freddy's over at the Bellamy Mansion right now, wrapped around the carefully restored newel posts."

"Samantha, you're beautiful," Hornsby Pelletier said, barely recognizing the awe in his voice. She was beautiful and sexy and she got him AND his love for Freddy, the world's most dangerous best friend. Also, he knew she was from Burgaw and could keep him in blueberries for life.

"You know what I'm thinking?" she asked.

"That Freddy could be the best man at our wedding?"

"Uh, no, that's weird. I was thinking that since we're already up that we should drive down to the beach and watch the sunrise over Johnnie Mercer's Pier and maybe grab a crabmeat omelet at Causeway Café . . ."

"Samantha soon-to-be-Pelletier, I think I love you."

Duplin County native Celia Rivenbark is a nationally syndicated humor columnist and best-selling author whose skewed take on pop culture comes slathered in Southernisms. She lives in Wilmington with her husband, daughter and four cats. This summer, she's reading The Girl on the Train by Paula Hawkins.

Sizzling Summer Fiction Issue

Money in the Mattress

A stripper on the run. A worried mother.
A lonely detective in quest of five big ones.
Someone's going to wind up horizontal

Fiction by Paul Crenshaw

Photograph by Tim Sayer

MODEL: ABIGAIL SCHELL

Sinatra sang that New York is the city that never sleeps, but North Carolina naps every afternoon. I had been to The Big Apple earlier that week and was back home in N.C. when I realized we must sleep a lot here because of all the mattress stores. Just down the road in High Point is the furniture capital of the South, but when we aren't napping here, we recline, and I was reclining in the blue glow of the TV when I realized something about the girl I was looking for.

I'd been driving down Battleground, wondering where she might be. Her mother had hired me to find her and so far I'd struck out. I don't like striking out, but I had come up as dry as an ABC store on Sunday, so I went home to my office/apartment just off Elm, in the part of downtown that hasn't yet been revitalized.

I had just poured a drink when I saw an advertisement for one of the mattress stores, in which a man slept on a mound of cash. I stared at my ice cubes and thought of Battleground and all the mattress stores and suddenly it struck me.

I still didn't know where she was, but I had part of it. The money. The most important part.

The mother came in on a Sunday. This was an afternoon in late June and the heat had already settled into summer. She wore a white summer dress and cowboy boots like I had seen college girls wear when I went down Tate or Spring Garden.

She wasn't a college girl. She was pushing 50, though she tried to look 30. One of those women who refuses to acknowledge age. And, I have to say, age had not acknowledged her.

"My daughter is missing," she said. Her voice sounded like ice cubes melting into weak scotch.

"So is mine," I told her, which was true. I was watching the train rumble past. The whole building shook.

"I'll give you five large to find her."

Five large? I thought. I wondered how many cop shows she had watched. Most of my jobs were finding out whether the bank president was sleeping with his secretary, which he usually was, and no one paid five large—or said it.

"When did you last see her?"

"A week ago. In New York." Her breath hitched. "I think they're going to kill her."

Turns out that was the only truthful thing she told me. It's also how I ended up flying to New York that afternoon. She dabbed at her eyes with a tissue the whole flight. I didn't know whether that was truthful or not.

She hid the money in the mattress. That was what I thought when I stood in her apartment in New York, the city where no one ever sleeps. There was a long slit. Some of the stuffing had come out. The men she robbed—"They're bad men," the mother told me—must have torn through it, looking for the money.

The mother made sure I saw it. She looked like a hooker with a heart of gold but was really a harridan with a heart that had hardened, although I only found that out later. After we'd rolled around in the sack a few times.

By the time I went back out, the city had shut down. A few college kids hung downtown as the bars let out, but I wasn't looking for college kids.

I was smoking again—I always smoke when I'm trying to figure out the particulars of a case, and the cigarette smoke curled up with me in the cab, which made me think of things burning— and something the mother had said.

The apartment in New York was a dump. One of those holes in the wall that still rent for a thousand a month, but are barely bigger than a closet. She had just shown me the ripped mattress, and I remember thinking most of the room was ripped as well.

"Her rent is due tomorrow," she said, dabbing at her eyes, and I thought then it was a natural reaction to a mother hearing her child is in trouble—focus on the thing you can control. "I'm putting everything in storage until we find her."

I remember thinking she should just burn everything. But she wouldn't burn it. Of course she wouldn't burn it.

We spent an eventful night in New York and flew back to Greensboro the next morning. She said her daughter had come here. I asked her how she knew.

"Mother's intuition," she said.

Horse shit, I thought. It was beginning to dawn on me that all was not right with this story, but I had to keep shuffling cards until the joker turned up. The slit-open mattress had been the first shuffle. The second was the advertisement, and the third was this woman who wouldn't dispose of worthless furniture.

My next shuffle was to hit the mattress stores, see who got deliveries from New York.

We get a lot of furniture shipments in this area of North Carolina. Adirondack chairs, chaise lounges, couches, divans, settees, davenports, ottomans, all those names that have lost any meaning.

There are also a lot of mattress stores. They sell box springs, too. The thing that goes under the mattress.

That was part of it, I thought, driving down Battleground toward the big buildings, but I needed to find the daughter, and the only thing I had to go on was the mother.

She was 50, and tried to look 30. The daughter was 30.

I figured she'd try to look 20.

I went to the bars near UNCG and Greensboro College, where sometimes sorority girls stop in and order Sex on the Beach, or Cosmos if they want to seem classy.

I'd already done the background on the daughter—I did that on my computer in the hotel room while the mother readied herself to seduce me. I didn't have the heart to tell her it wasn't that hard to do. I spent a lot of time working. The few women I meet always ask what I do. When I tell them I'm a private detective they say "What? Like *The Big Sleep*? Raymond Chandler stuff?" They take in the cheap suit and shoes, and that pretty much ends it.

She'd been working, the daughter, in a strip club. In New York, New York, the city so nice they named it twice, where every strip club is a front for some low grade mob wannabees, and I guess she'd stuck around long enough that they let her into the office where the safe was kept.

She must have stolen the money on a Saturday night and fled south, to a city so hot in summer its namesake died of sunstroke, knowing they wouldn't open again until Monday.

But she was smarter than most strippers, even the ones putting themselves through college. She knew she couldn't just run because they'd find her. She had to disappear.

So I was at the college bar searching for a woman who would look 20 but be slightly older. Who would act stupid, but have some brains above the breasts.

It didn't take long. It wasn't that night, but I had time. I was getting paid by the mother, and she was occasionally stopping by to mess up my sheets, as motivation to keep me on the case.

When I saw her, I knew it was her. She sat with a sestina of sorority girls on Spring Garden at Old Town Draught House, but she wasn't drinking, wasn't laughing when one said "Here's to Sex on the Beach" and the girl next to her said "I wish!"

With enough money you can disguise yourself as anything. And who would look for a college girl when trying to find a thief who'd stolen a million-five? She had learned the art of hiding in plain sight. I suspect she'd read Poe's "Purloined Letter," back when she really was a college student.

But I wasn't ready yet, so even after I found her I staked out the bar to see what nights she came in. I began noticing the long black cars with tinted windows that were also watching her. I wondered if they would ever give up, like she thought they would. I wondered if I'd find a gun to the back of my head one night.

I wondered if anyone would care.

While I waited, I made a few calls to New York. A good P.I. has people

everywhere. I had a few there. I had a few here, too. And I had a few who worked shipping in both places.

Good friends are hard to find. Most people, you have to slip some cash. If I played my hand right, I'd have plenty coming.

Two weeks later, she was at Old Town again with her sorority sisters. I wondered what they'd think if I told them she was 30. That she stripped in New York in a place where an extra hundred would get a man more than a strip tease. But the way they dressed, I wasn't sure if they'd care. The girls who go to Allure on Saturday nights look the same.

I waited until she stepped out to smoke. I lit her cigarette for her.

I said, "They're coming for you, Denise, and I'm the only one who can stop them."

She didn't try to deny it. "I guess my mother hired you?" she said. She didn't wait for me to nod. "You found me," she said. "Congratulations."

"I'm not sure you know how serious this is."

She looked away. "I'm not sure you know anything about it."

"I know they'll kill you and bury you in New Jersey."

She didn't try to deny that either. It would have been smarter if she had. Smarter if she realized mob guys didn't give up just because you laid low for a few months before spending the money, even low grade wannabes like these.

"How do you know they'll figure it out?"

I laughed then. I couldn't help it. I realized that she was just smart enough to get herself killed. Her plan had holes big enough to swing a dead giraffe through. It wouldn't even have worked for a plot on one of the detective shows her mother must have watched to come up with phrases like five large, but it was ingenious in its own way. Poe would have been proud.

But the guys chasing her had figured it out, and they would make her disappear soon. Fish food, and the like.

"They already have," I said.

When I laid it all out to her, she told me which warehouse. And when. She was shaking when she said it. I called the mother.

"I've found her," I said.

Then I told her everything else, including how we were going to end this. She protested, but I knew she would.

As I knew her protests would keep her from seeing that I wasn't telling her the whole truth.

I made the daughter wash off the make-up. Get rid of the Delta Zeta shirt she wore, the sorority pins.

"I hired you to find her," the mother said. "Not get us all killed."

I had finally seen what the mother's heart was made of. I won't say stone, but definitely a type of ore. Not one that rhymes with old, cold, and Leopold.

"We both know why you hired me," I told her.

When we went to the warehouse, they thought the shipment had arrived. The mob men were closing in, I had told them, and that part was true. I had dropped a call to them, telling them when and where, that for safe passage for the girl, they'd get the money.

I was hiding among the box springs and mattresses. Well behind them, in case there was gunplay.

I sent the mother and daughter out. The mob men were huge. They didn't bother to hide the holsters beneath their suits. I had told Denise what to say — so sorry, you'll get the money, please don't kill me, et cetera.

I let her cry for a short time. I let the mother worry. That was for lying to me. The rest of it — the thing that was about to happen — was for putting my life in danger. And because I'm tired of this city.

Which was why I pulled my pistol and fired a few rounds into the lights, to create as much confusion as possible. The police were already arriving, as were the girls from Denise's sorority, and I needed to be leaving.

It really was a plan Poe would have been proud of.

It was the box spring, you see. It was the only thing in the room that wasn't ripped.

Most people hide their money in the mattress. The mob guys thought that, too. They'd ripped up everything in the room but the box spring.

As she knew they would. She was already on a plane to Charlotte by then, where her mother picked her up at the airport. She'd brought just enough money to create a new life, but she couldn't bring a million-five because if they caught her — or customs did — she'd spend the rest of her life six feet under the Meadowlands of New Jersey.

So she'd left it in plain sight. Her mother had put everything in storage instead of dumping it, or leaving it for the super to take care of. Which told me the money had still been there.

She'd kept her head low. She thought they'd eventually back off.

And when they backed off, she was going to ship it here, to a city with so many mattress and furniture stores, no one would be looking for a lone box spring.

One stuffed with a million-five in cash.

The mother had hired me for protection in case they found her daughter. She wanted me to keep an eye on her until the danger had passed. With a million-five, she could pay me for a long time. And the occasional visits late at night were to sweeten the pot.

She should have known that I, like all PIs, have four ex-wives. Numerous mistresses. A daughter who doesn't care much for me. That's part of the profession. Didn't she ever watch any old shows?

We are, those of us who have pebbled glass office windows in an old, unair-conditioned building in the run down part of town, immune to feminine charms.

What I told the police on the phone was part true. There was criminal activity in Greensboro. I just lied about the type. I told them there was a sex-trafficking ring that ran up the I-95 corridor, and that it was started by mob men from New York and perpetuated by the mother and daughter, who pretended to be college students so they could snatch up sorority girls and sell them to Eastern Europe.

They were meeting in an old warehouse downtown, the one with Green's Burrough still painted on the east wall.

I had also sent a message to the sorority sisters that there was free booze at a certain downtown warehouse. They should spread the word.

A white lie, I say. There is a sex-trafficking problem in the area, one police need to pay more attention to.

And I needed some time to get away.

I had the box spring shipped to a different warehouse. By the time the police sort out everything, I'll be having drinks with little umbrellas in them. A million-five — minus the couple grand I used to grease the palms of shipping agents — goes a long way in these climes.

I hear they sleep on sand where I'm going, so I won't have to see a mattress store ever again.

I will miss the mother. The look she gave me as I left the warehouse may haunt me.

But sex on the beach will help with that.

Greensboro resident and Elon prof Paul Crenshaw is reading Eula Biss' Notes From No Man's Land, *Joan Didion's* The White Album *and Steve Almond's* God Bless America. *You can read what he writes in* Best American Essays, Best American Nonrequired Reading, Glimmer Train, Ecotone, North American Review *and* Brevity.

Love Over Par

Sizzling Summer Fiction Issue

Thanks to bewitching Vampadelle Summer, passion was tiptoeing through Dicky Smythe's heart like Amazons at a grape stomping.

FICTION BY JIM MORIARTY · PHOTOGRAPH BY TIM SAYER

MODELS LEFT TO RIGHT: BLAIR MILLER, RICHELLE MODOLO, JIM MORIARTY, KELLY MILLER, CHRISTIAN DRAUGHN. PHOTOGRAPHED AT MID PINES INN AND GOLF CLUB

Her name was Vampadelle Summer, and she wasn't to be trusted.

No one knew this better than Rewind, who pushed down the lid of the Mercedes trunk as delicately as if he was performing chest compressions on a hummingbird. Respecting the peace and solitude of the deeply disturbed was something Rewind believed in with the same enthusiasm the ancient Greeks applied to naked wrestling. It was simply what one did and no one did what one was supposed to do, when one was supposed to do it, better than Rewind. He was a caddie of the first rank.

Besides, 77 wasn't the end of Western civilization, though this particular 77 felt like Visigoths running amuck in St. Peter's Square, if par was your status quo ante.

"I'm a good iron player. No, I'm a great iron player," said Rewind's passenger, Dicky Smythe. The caddie slipped the key into the ignition. The Mercedes purred, a marked contrast to the choppy groans coming from Smythe, his mind trapped in a recurring loop of one horrific shot after another after another.

"One of the best," Rewind offered.

"Three greens. Who hits three greens?" Smythe thumb-punched his cell phone, entering numbers into its calculator. "That's 1-6-point-6-6 percent." He held the screen up as digital confirmation.

Rewind had nothing to add. You can't fight an Android.

"Your head wasn't where it needed to be," the caddie finally said as they turned right out of the Congressional Country Club driveway.

"What?"

"You were distracted."

"Wasn't I, though?" Dicky said, and sighed. This was not just any sigh. Its timbre was as distinctive as a bassoon and its look as easy to diagnose as gangrene. Rewind had seen it all too often during his career. It came down to one thing and one thing alone: Love was tiptoeing through Dicky Smythe's internal organs like Amazons at a grape stomping. Rewind's player had been struck by Cupid's arrow squarely between his takeaway and his flying right elbow.

"Why don't you get some sleep?" Rewind said.

"Good idea," Dicky replied, lumping his cashmere sweater into a ball and putting it under his adorable ear as he leaned against the passenger window, tinted the color of blood pudding or, more to the point, what Rewind feared was the darkness of Vampadelle Summer's heart. So depressed was Smythe he passed out like a college freshman face-down in the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*, depositing a frothy drool on his argyle Pringle. Rewind knew it was none other than Vampadelle Summer who had informed Dicky of his adorability, ear-wise. The author of the blog *Trampoline Effect*, Summer had planted herself on the golf circuit with the ruthlessness of Pizarro claiming Peru. Early in the week at Congressional, and for reasons known only to herself, she'd taken a particular shine to Dicky Smythe, resulting in a blog entry about him titled "From The Lone Cypress with Love." It was the story of the courageous career trajectory of the son of a bond trader who grew up in Pebble Beach; learned the game under the tutelage of renowned golf instructor Bones Regis (creator of such phrases as "Just beat the livin' crap out of it, kid."), who finally got his playing privileges in the big leagues after three years on the Crazy Horse Cabaret Mini-Tour in North and South Dakota and who now appeared on the cusp of, according to Vampadelle Summer, journeyman stardom. Dicky Smythe, of course, fell deeply and inexorably in love with her, not to mention her shapely calves and size-five cross trainers.

Rewind was painfully aware that love was something a golfer should undertake with the same anxiety as a grip change or perhaps the defusing of an unexploded World War II buzz bomb. Either can lead to a calamity on a scale not seen since Vesuvius buried Pompeii. Dicky Smythe had just, as it were, moved his emotional thumb into a weaker position. The rest was now up to fate and the good graces of Vampadelle Summer. Like any experienced caddie, Rewind was allowing for the worst.

So exhausted was Smythe, from love or losing or both, he didn't stir from his uneasy sleep during the five-hour drive to Blues Crossing, North Carolina, until Rewind pulled the car up to the portico entrance of the massive old hotel and the valet, dressed in plus fours, yanked open the door.

"Welcome to The Pantheon," said the valet as he doffed his herringbone cap and watched the sleeping Dicky tumble out onto the pavement. "Are you all right, sir?" he said, looking down.

"Fine," Smythe replied, making a show of stretching the tender L3 and L4 vertebrae of his lower back as he gathered himself off the ground. He looked up at the great hotel ablaze with lights. This was a far cry from the Crazy Horse Cabaret Mini-Tour. The Pantheon itself had evolved over the decades, spreading colonnades, rotundas and cherubic fountains, to become just the sort of hideout where guests could decant port wine in the Bonaparte Room and reminisce about the gold standard as cries of "Fore!" echoed through the pine forest. The Pantheon was not, however, immune to the vicissitudes of market bubbles. Financial Armageddon had forced the hotel to change hands from time to time. One man's called bank note was another's blue light special. The most recent rollover involved its purchase by Gideon Fitch, the North Carolina baron of rare earth elements. It's of no use trying to explain rare earth elements here other than to say they are not traded on a traditional bourse but in private deals, much like cocaine, and with a similarly festive profit margin. Gideon Fitch did two things once the creative destruction of capitalism placed The Pantheon in his care. He opened a casino, The Golden Fleece, and he founded a golf tournament, The Pantheon Classic. Dicky Smythe had come there to win it. That, and the affections of the blogger Vampadelle Summer.

While the valet emptied the contents of Dicky's trunk onto a luggage cart, the golfer stood mesmerized. Perhaps, it was the Vegas ambience of the façade, but his pasty color made it seem far more likely Dicky was suffering yet another searing golf flashback. As Rewind slipped the valet a fiver for his troubles, another, larger Mercedes pulled up close behind them, its front bumper nudging Dicky out of his trance. From the driver's side appeared none other than Jimmy Wildheart, the winner of the Super Pac National Pro-Am at Congressional Country Club. It was Wildheart who had played in the penultimate twosome alongside Dicky Smythe and witnessed each and every one of the unfortunate 77 blows. Although it would be wrong to suggest Wildheart took delight in the struggles of his playing companion, he was not altogether without cheerfulness about it either. Coupled with his sterling 64 and the over-par rounds of the last twosome of Billy Ray Toomey and Tinkie Bjornover, Wildheart had strolled to victory with all the care of a man who'd been informed one of his ex-wives had been fitted with an electronic ankle bracelet and placed under house arrest.

"Dicky!" Jimmy Wildheart called out to the other half of his former twosome as if they had been childhood companions who hadn't seen one another since that embarrassing episode in sixth grade involving Miss Withers and a fruit cup.

Dicky Smythe turned his haunted gaze away from The Pantheon. "Jimmy," he said.

"We would have been here sooner but we decided to stop at the Taxidermy Hall of Fame," Jimmy said, closing the big Mercedes' door with a rich thud. "They have the most amazing fudge there."

Dicky replied the only way he could. "Oh."

Like a caddie who knows his man doesn't have enough club to clear the

hazard, Rewind had a tingling sense of foreboding. "Great playing back there," he said to Wildheart, motioning with his thumb over his shoulder.

"Thanks," Jimmy replied, coming around the car and opening the passenger's door as another plus four-adorned valet worked to fish the Wildheart luggage from the depths of a trunk large enough to hold a VW Beetle like a nesting doll. Out of Jimmy Wildheart's Mercedes, like Jonah exiting the whale, stepped none other than Vampadelle Summer herself.

The distance and speed with which Dicky's stomach plummeted to the pavement would have sent a lesser organ to Middle Earth. Rewind's chin dropped to his chest. No sooner do you recover from fortune's head butt than it goes straight for the kidney, he thought. The woman Dicky Smythe was sure would be the search engine in his pursuit of love was traveling in the company of the very man who had just beaten him by no fewer than 13 strokes. To be blunt, it was a setback.

"Hi, Dicky!" Vampadelle said. Though Smythe couldn't bring himself to find any facet of Vampadelle Summer less than enchanting, he was aware she frequently spoke with a level of enthusiasm a decibel or two below a regiment of pillaging Cossacks. If Dicky didn't necessarily find this enthusiasm endearing, he was at least able to overlook it the way you might overlook the sheer weight of an ingot of gold. It was simply one of its properties. That she was happy to see him was, of course, some consolation. That she should express that delight while disembarking from Jimmy Wildheart's courtesy car was less encouraging. So much so that, in fact, he was having trouble expressing his true feelings.

"Whaztheggerbunttttter, uh?"

Like any naturally gifted journalist, Vampadelle Summer had the ability to divine a quote word for word from virtually any utterance, even Dicky's, and then to repeat it with what she believed to be stone tablet accuracy.

"I just got an exclusive!" she said, by way of interpreting Dicky Smythe's mumbles and simultaneously explaining why she was appearing from where she was. Let's just say that the notion of "an exclusive" was as comforting in that instant to Smythe as the knowledge that his 77 in the Super Pac National Pro-Am had allowed him to do the limbo under 80.

It was true, exclusivity in the romantic sphere had not been among the topics Dicky had yet found the courage to broach, either in public or in private, with Ms. Summer. The last time they'd spoken they'd barely gotten far enough to discover the adorability of his ears, a fact arrived at initially when Vampadelle Summer asked him about a topic she believed to be a matter of keen interest to her readers, namely the activities of pros during rain delays. His competitive nature being what it was, Dicky was determined not to allow Jimmy Wildheart to get his nose out in front on the home stretch to exclusivity, but he feared he might be too late. Like all golfers, there are gloomy days when you look at the swamp and all you see are the alligators, never the snowy egrets. This was just such a day.

"Plluzzumwhenaffumpet," he continued.

"Jimmy is soooo interesting!" Vampadelle continued. "Did you know he taught himself how to juggle?"

In fact, Dicky knew quite a lot about Jimmy Wildheart. Who didn't? Wildheart already had one four-toed foot in the Hall of Fame, having shot off the least useful one on his right foot in a quail hunting accident when he was 12. Among the many things Jimmy Wildheart was capable of juggling were his three ex-wives, Wendy, Wendy and Destiny Wildheart. Vampadelle Summer donned the backpack containing her viperous laptop. "The post will go up tonight," she said to Jimmy as she planted a kiss on his cheek. "Thank you soooooo much."

"I'll have the valet take the luggage to your room," Jimmy said.

"Off to reception!" Vampadelle announced.

It was with a suitably restrained level of admiration that Jimmy Wildheart, Dicky Smythe and Rewind watched Vampadelle Summer scamper up the steps and enter The Pantheon. This is precisely where the two golfers would have happily gone their separate ways, no more anxious to relive the day's events than a pair of Trappist monks would enjoy trading stock tips. The quiet, however, was shattered by the owner of the resort himself.

"Jiiimmmy!" Gideon Fitch boomed.

Fitch was a man of monumental proportions. His head would not have been out of place topping an Easter Island statue. It would have overmatched any human body with the exception of his own. His voice could propel words vast distances and his handshake was less a greeting than a strenuous interrogation technique. The owner of The Pantheon lumbered down the marble staircase on a meaty pair of legs whose knees had long since ceased to reside in the same ZIP code.

"Saw you on TV with Jimmy," Fitch said to Dicky Smythe, referencing the 77 only by way of his pernicious smile. The resort owner extended his hand in greeting, engulfing Dicky's own like a boa constrictor smothering a spring lamb. The great man's jowls trembled like lemon Jell-O as he squeezed.

"Dicky Smythe," said Dicky, introducing himself breathlessly, "with two y's." As the grip pressure tightened, the golfer grew faint. His left eye began to twitch. Fortunately for Dicky, Fitch practiced catch and release. The industrial magnet turned his attention to Jimmy Wildheart. The winner of the Super Pac National Pro-Am immediately stuffed both hands into the large pocket of his golf bag pretending to dig about for his Rolex. "Let's get you settled, Jimmy," Fitch said, giving Wildheart a disappointing slap on the back instead of his customary death grip. The rumor was Gideon Fitch had offered Jimmy Wildheart a $1 million line of credit in his casino to entice him to play in The Pantheon Classic. Of course, such under-the-table appearance monies were frowned upon by the officials of the golf circuit which, nonetheless, chose under all circumstances to look the other way whenever it happened. "You're in the Mellon Suite. Top floor."

It wasn't that Fitch was in a hurry to seal his business deal with Jimmy Wildheart. Rather, he was buying low and selling high. Wildheart, among the best the world had to offer at golf, was no less in the absolute top drawer when it came to losing at poker. He doubled down when he should fold. He bit his lip when he bluffed. He tossed chips into the center of the table like a nymph scattering $1,000 rose petals. Gideon Fitch knew the sooner he got Jimmy Wildheart settled at a blackjack table in The Golden Fleece, the quicker his million, plus what he guessed would amount to a tidy percentage of Wildheart's winnings from the Super Pac National Pro-Am, would be in the plus column.

Dicky watched them walk up the steps and disappear through the same revolving door as Vampadelle Summer. Perhaps it was the lingering pain in his hand, or oxygen deprivation, but in that instant Dicky Smythe was struck by an overwhelming sense of predestination, a feeling in the solar plexus as familiar to every tournament golfer as acid reflux. He knew, just knew, to a deadbolt certainty, that not only was he going to win The Pantheon Classic but Vampadelle Summer as well.

"I'm a big believer in fate," he said to Rewind. "I have a good feeling about this. That's all I'm going to tell you."

Rewind sighed. Resilience can be a bitch.

Jim Moriarty joined the staff of Golf World *magazine in 1979 when it was still based in Southern Pines. He covered the PGA Tour taking photographs and writing for* Golf Digest *and* Golf World *for 35 years. He has written two golf-themed novels,* Open Season *and* Voodoo Links, *and lives in Southern Pines with his wife, Audrey.*

Greenfield Lake

Wilmington's hidden gem, rooted in community life

By Jill Gerard · Photographs by Mark Steelman

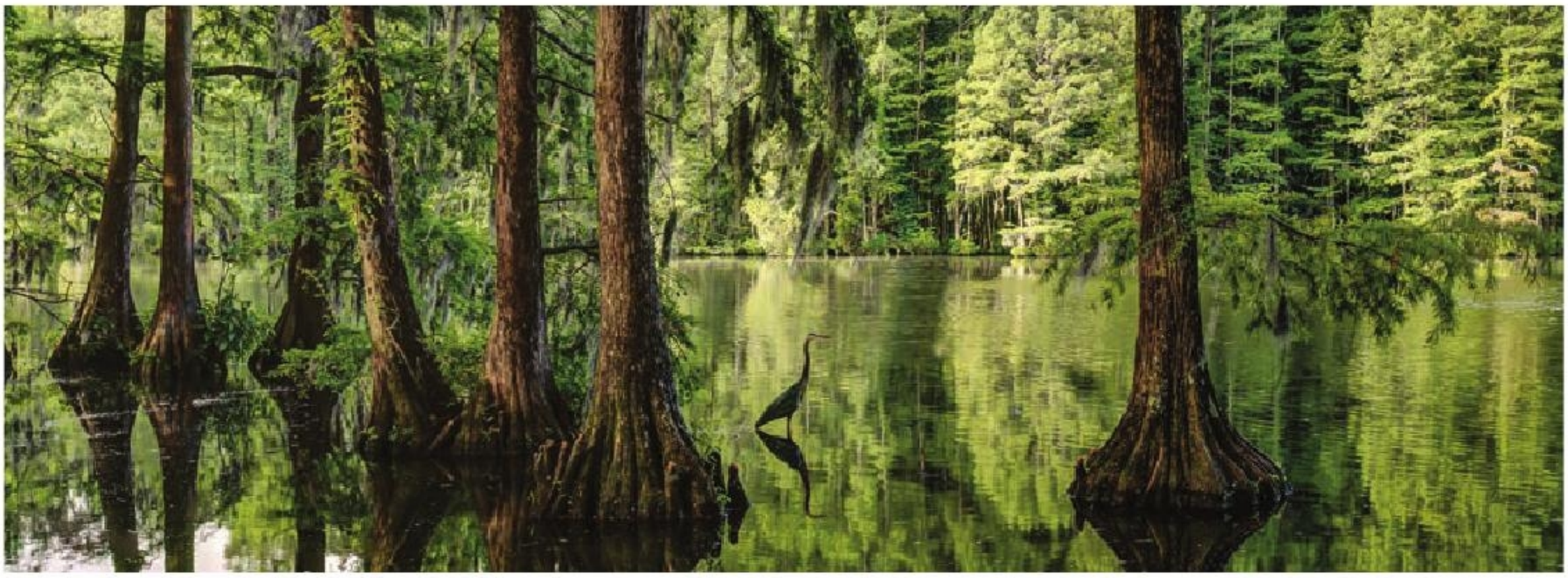
Last summer, on a sultry day, my husband, son and I arrived at Greenfield Lake to while away an hour or two on a paddleboat. We parked and passed the signs asking visitors to *not* feed the wildlife, then turned toward the boathouse. Canoes and kayaks were tethered to the dock and a few paddleboats remained. After signing the waiver and finding life vests, the dockhand helped us climb aboard and adjusted our sunshade.

Soon we were headed toward the stand of cypress. The boat made a steady churning, and it didn't take long to feel the burn in our thighs. Once in the shade, we slowed down, sometimes just drifting quietly. As we rounded a bend, we found at least 100 baby turtles sunning themselves on the leaves of wax myrtle growing in the water around the trees. Sunlight dappled the dark green water, and though we could hear children laughing, there was not another soul in sight.

After watching the turtles for a time, we started pedaling again, slowly maneuvering between trees and around cypress knees. Eventually, we were back in open water. "Look," I whispered. Just ahead there was a sinuous movement in the water. A snout and then six inches away, eyes. An alligator — our first sighting this trip. It was a big gator, as the inches from nose to eyes equate to feet in body length. We continued to pedal along. The height of the boat made me feel safer than I thought I might feel in a kayak. Herons and egrets waded in the shallows in search of food. Overhead, an osprey glided past.

Off to our right, Lion's Bridge crossed over a narrowed finger of the lake. Up on the bridge, fishermen and women dropped lines, and excited children watched for signs of alligator.

We pedaled on past a tree filled with roosting night herons, swamp rose sheltering green heron, a stand of saw grass. By the end of the hour, we'd seen six alligators, many more turtles, and too many birds to count. The breeze on the water alleviated the heat of the day, and the cold bottles of water we brought seemed like such a treat. All too soon, we were back at the dock, climbing out of the boat and hanging up our life jackets. As we thanked the deckhand, we made promises to each other to get back here soon.



Long before Greenfield Lake Park existed, the area was known simply as Greenfields. A network of creeks bubbled up through the sand, creating natural wetlands. In the 1700s, Dr. Samuel Green, a surgeon and general physician, owned the land. Taking advantage of the natural elements, he dammed a small creek, creating the start of the lake we know today. On this site, Green developed a rice plantation that spread over 470 acres. He added a spillway and mill. At the time, the plantation was thought to be far from the city, though today it is just a short drive to the downtown shops.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, the lake was called McIlhenny's Mill Pond. In 1912, the Tidewater Power Company had extended the trolley line to the lake, and it quickly became a popular destination with diving boards, docks and bathhouses. McIlhenny rented rowboats, and the beauty of the cypress trees beckoned young lovers. In those days, visitors enjoyed swimming in the lake's crystal clear water.

In the intervening years, the land changed hands and for a time Howard and Wells Amusement Company leased it, calling the area Lakeside Park. Amusements, a dance pavilion and a small zoo entertained visitors. By 1925, the land was sold to the city of Wilmington. Active community leaders, including Mrs. R.W. Hicks, Carl Rehder, J.E.L. Wade, and Louis T. Moore, and community groups, including North Carolina Sorosis and the Cape Fear Garden Club, championed Wilmington's first municipal park. Calls went out for residents to get involved by donating bulbs and plants. Some 500,000 azalea bushes would eventually fill the park.

Access to the lake and park was limited at the time, as no road circled the lake. But an active and interested community would change the situation. Employed city residents began to donate one day's wages per month for eight months, raising $110,000 for a road project. With the help of the WPA, the unemployed and incarcerated labored side by side to build the road. Their wages came from those donations, community-raised funds, and the federal government. By 1932, Community Drive was completed.

The roots of Greenfield Lake Park are grounded in community spirit, and it is that spirit that infuses the park with life today. The diving boards, amusement park and its fences, and petting zoo are long gone. But the lake still draws people.

Lake Shore Drive, a designated scenic byway, meanders along the edge of Greenfield Lake, curving under branches of live oaks, the water a green shimmer beyond the tree line. Following the contours of the road, a paved trail takes walkers and joggers on the five-mile tour. The park remains a city playground. Along the way, large grassy expanses create a perfect place to play ball or have a picnic.

The parklands are beautiful, but the real jewel is the lake itself. On warm days, people paddle kayaks and canoes through stands of cypress. Others use pedal power on paddleboats.

Cape Fear River Watch (CFRW) runs the boat rental concession. CFRW was founded in 1993 to protect and improve the water quality of the lower Cape Fear River Basin. The funds raised through the boat rentals at Greenfield Lake help CFRW meet its mission. At the lake, CFRW schedules regular cleanups to remove invasive species from the lake. Two of the plants — water hyacinth and creeping water-primrose — might look pretty from shore, but they spread quickly, limiting water flow and blocking sunlight. The result is water starved for oxygen, a problem for both water quality and wildlife. Another issue for the shallow, still water is algae bloom. The watershed for Greenfield Lake is extensive and because the lake is in the city, run-off brings in fertilizer, pesticides, oil and more.

Recently, I had the good fortune to talk to Kemp Burdette, executive director and riverkeeper. His energy and love for the local waterways infused our conversation. He mentioned the educational mission of CFRW. At Greenfield Lake, the group offers environmental education classes, eco-tours and bird watching tours. School groups are often at the lake, from groups of UNCW students to elementary school children. The hands-on lessons help engage the young members of the community, hopefully inspiring them to become involved in taking care of our natural resources. Burdette says the last three to four years have seen improved water quality, and he hopes this is a continuing trend. Keeping the lake healthy takes care from the larger community.

A healthy lake brings joy to the young lovers who still drift beneath the canopy of Spanish moss, to the children who enthusiastically point out turtles and alligators, to the birdwatchers and fishermen and women who appreciate the quiet stillness, to the picnickers and walkers who are captivated by the play of light on the water. Burdette calls Greenfield Lake "the hidden gem of Wilmington."

It is a gem. So some warm afternoon, head to the lake. If you are lucky, you will get ahead of the others and glide silently through the trees. Sharp eyes will quickly spot turtles sunning themselves on logs, hatchlings clinging to leaves and small branches. Watch for the undulating water. Perhaps it is an alligator cruising along, eyes and nose breaking the surface.

Drift quietly and listen. The lake is home to all the wading birds of the region, songbirds, ducks and waterfowl, and raptors. Green herons, blue herons and egrets stilt the shallows as they hunt for food. Cormorants swim, their heads breaking the water. Anhinga perch on stumps, wings spread wide to let them dry. Songbirds flit from tree to tree, calling to one another.

Below the surface, largemouth bass, gar and bluegills share the water with darters and minnows. The shoreline with its fallen branches and vegetation creates a perfect home. Catfish scavenge the bottom.

Away from the other boaters and out of sight of cars and houses, it is easy to imagine that the years have slipped away. The small creeks and springs have been filling the lake for hundreds of years — and with any luck, this trend will continue.

Jill Gerard, essayist and poet, lives on the banks of Whiskey Creek with her husband, children, and dogs. She finds inspiration in the natural world.

A Graceful Rebirth

For owners Chris Gore and Matt TenHuisen, the run-down two-story at 512 Grace Street needed time, vision and a lot of creative love to shine again

By Ashley Wahl · Photographs by Rick Ricozzi

When preservationists commit to restoring century-old houses that faithfully reflect the style and charm of a certain era, the name of the game is historic integrity.

But when a house that desperately needs saving calls out to unconventional heroes — a pair of young visionaries with limited resources — fidelity becomes something of a relative term.

"We're not 'antique people' and we don't have family heirlooms," says Matt TenHuisen. "Our taste is a bit quirky for some, but if we like it, we're going to go for it."

Hence geometric patterns hand-stained onto gapped hardwood floors, porch spindles and window casings repurposed into one-of-a-kind furniture, and painted ceilings that mirror the patterned floors.

This is a story about how tapping into the spirit of history can spark a sense of creativity that conjures up the past every bit as much as a by-the-book restoration. It begins in 1996, when partners Chris Gore and Matt TenHuisen first saw the dilapidated two-story house at 512 Grace Street. The Colonial Revival monstrosity would eventually become the ultimate expression of their whimsical and somewhat rebellious natures.

Architecturally speaking, the house was humdrum: clapboard vernacular with diamond paned windows and subtle embellishments. The doors were boarded up, and half the roof had been destroyed by fire.

"It looked like a scene from *Amityville Horror*," says Chris, recalling the sagging porch and charred rafters.

They were living in a "brand new house in the suburbs" when the couple discovered a "shared and bizarre attraction to abandoned, run-down places," says Matt.

Although 512 Grace was not for sale, it fit the bill, and on a cool April evening, Chris, then 26, and Matt, 31, decided to explore the property. No one will be the wiser, they thought.

The interior was in shambles, but the two could see past the water damaged-floors and dingy, compartmentalized rooms. They saw a blank canvas.

"We were looking around inside when the owner pulled into the driveway," Chris recalls, "so we scurried out the back and walked around to the front of the house."

They played it cool.

"What are you boys doing?" asked Mrs. Ferguson.

"Oh, just looking," they replied. The thought of rolling up their sleeves and transforming the house room by room felt like a calling. "If you ever want to sell it," they told Mrs. Ferguson, "we're interested."

"Not going to happen," she replied. Or something to that effect. She was nice, recalls Matt, but the house — the second incarnation of it, anyway— had belonged to her family since 1960.

As Chris remembers it, they gave her their number "in case she ever changed her mind" and got the call just weeks later.

What happened next still astonishes them almost twenty years later.

"We had no idea what we were doing," says Matt, but they bought the historic district home for $60,000 and proceeded to gut the interior them-

selves. About five months later, when their house in the suburbs finally sold, they slept at friends' houses while completing what they consider to be the largest and most fulfilling project of their lives.

Start to finish, the renovation took sixteen months. They hired a crew to replace the roof, then, working nights and weekends, they ripped out drop ceilings, widened entryways, sanded and stained oak and heart pine flooring, installed trim and coffered ceilings, salvaged what could be repurposed, and, along the way, made up their own rules and discovered the idiosyncrasies of an old house originally built as a one-story home in the 1880s.

They started in the upstairs bedroom where, neighbors speculated, one of several occupants living there in the early '90s fell asleep with a lit cigarette.

"People used to ask if we needed gasoline and matches to finish the job," says Chris.

Now people ask different questions: Namely, can we come over?

Chris and Matt have participated in "just about every house tour in Wilmington," says Chris. "We're sort of known for our floors and ceilings."

And come Christmas, they're known for suspending their tree upside down from the lofty dining room ceiling, where a hand-painted wind rose pattern mirrors the one on the floor.

"My mother is a Christmas wackadoodle," explains Matt, who grew up with five siblings in a seven-bedroom farmhouse in upstate New York. "She had this thing when we were growing up that she had to have a Christmas tree in every single room of the house, which I tried my hardest to resist."

The Old Wilmington by Candlelight Tour finally broke him.

"There was no place in the dining room to put a tree unless we hung it upside down," says Matt. "So that's what happened."

Although Matt is responsible for staining the checked and radial patterns and inlay onto oak and heart pine flooring — "to distract the eye from the gaps and cracks," he says — he's quick to credit his partner for the overall vision and aesthetic of the house.

"Chris is the creator," says Matt. "I just happen to be good at geometry."

In fact, a faculty position in the math department at UNCW is what brought him to Wilmington in the first place. He moved here in 1993 after earning his Ph.D. in mathematics from Clemson University, where he and Chris met 25 years ago. Chris finished school and followed.

"I majored in recreational therapy," says Chris, who had started working for Gap Inc. during college and discovered he was a natural sales consultant. Once in Wilmington, he began searching for opportunities in the realm of interior design, his true passion. Throughout the house, chic furnishing and light fixtures tell of his time at The Red Dinette (defunct) and Pottery Barn, where he continues to work part-time as a designer.

"We get bored really easily," says Chris from his seat in the front parlor. Subtlety and refinement are not their hallmarks. Witness the parlor, a Parisian-themed room with Tiffany blue walls and a carved wooden mantel likely added in the 1930s. "This room used to be red."

Above the mantel, where a wire sculpture of the Eiffel

Tower takes center stage, a black and white photograph of the City of Light is mounted on walls painted with a pattern reminiscent of the coffered ceiling.

"We like to travel," says Chris, who spent his earliest years in a Manhattan high-rise apartment above the fish and chips restaurant his mother owned — same state and yet a world away from Matt. "We sort of made this room our inspiration to visit Paris together."

Throughout the house, wood salvaged during the renovation was used for accent tables (porch spindles), built-in cabinets (oak moldings), the hand-stenciled dining room table (heart pine window casing), built-in window seats for the kitchen (doors found under the house), and bed frames (porch railing).

As with the crown molding and pediments, furniture was assembled on the back porch.

"We had no previous woodworking experience," says Chris, but they made it up as they went along. And they've done four downtown houses since.

"It was a lot of work," says Chris, "but we never had any major arguments."

"You're right," adds Matt. "I don't think we regretted it for a second. Even when I fell through the dining room floor."

When guests see the house for the first time (picturesque, powder blue exterior, gracious front porch), Matt shares the history as he learned it from the grandson of Dr. Smith, the dentist who bought the house in 1902 and added the second floor sometime around 1904. Having stopped by one day during the early stages of renovation, he asked to look around. He recognized the wallpaper from his childhood.

"He told me that the Smith family had six kids and that three of them got married in the house the same year," says Matt.

That year, Matt continues, the family did some "reasonably significant renovations," including the installation of oak floors. This was sometime in the 1930s. To their understanding, the Smith family sold the house to the Fergusons in the 1960s, and Chris and Matt have been shaping its history for nearly two decades.

Their guests help.

In addition to the master suite above the dining room, there are two guest bedrooms upstairs and a finished attic with sleeping accommodations.

"We entertain a lot," says Chris, adding that friends have even "crashed" on the sleigh sofa in the formal parlor.

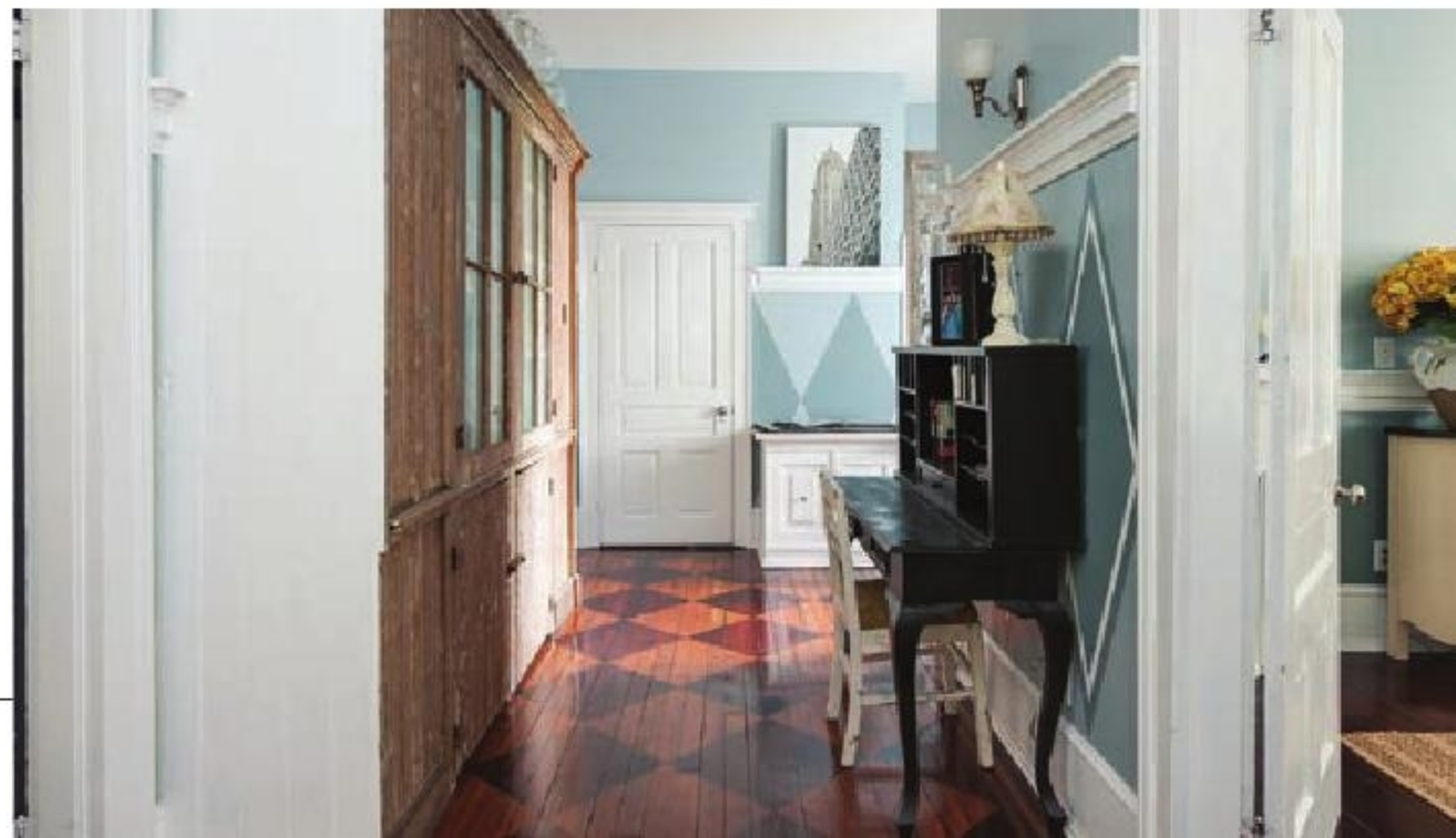
But nothing about the house is really all that formal, the pair will tell you.

In the backyard, the private saltwater pool and cabana create a swanky vibe for movie nights and, on hot days, frozen margaritas.

"Eventually, we want to build a guest house here," says Chris, whose love of hosting recently culminated when he and a business partner launched Events at Watermark, a full-service event venue for large-scale weddings, corporate meetings and festivals located on River Road.

But at the end of the day, there's no place Chris would rather be than on the front porch with Matt.

"We tell people we have a historic house, but it's a livable historic house," says Chris. "We just sort of made it our own."



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ALMANAC

August

By Rosetta Fawley

Words to Grow On

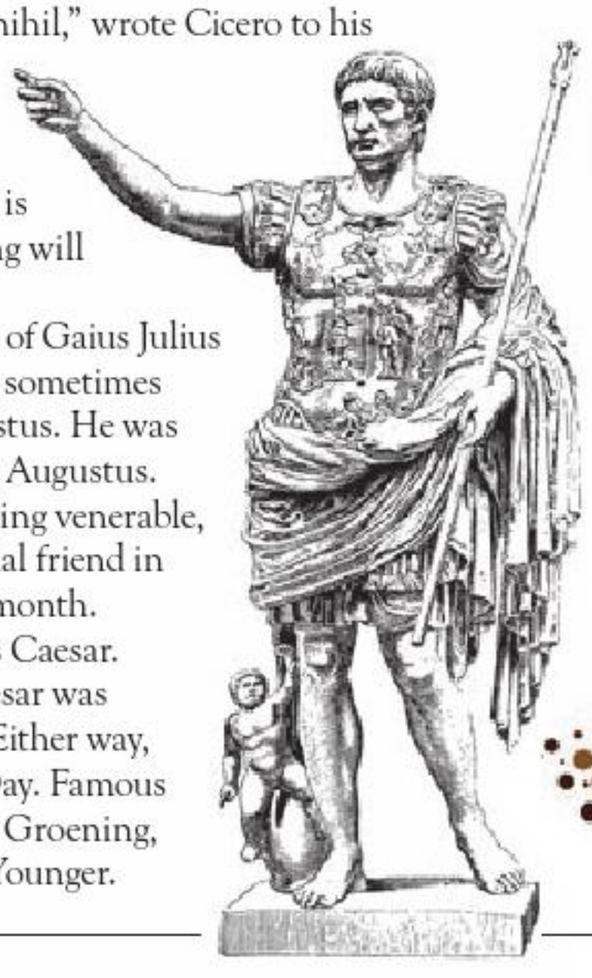
August is National Goat Cheese Month. And surely 2015 must be a particularly good year for goat cheese because it's the Year of the Goat in the Chinese calendar.

In nature's clever way, August is also the month that figs are at their best. What could be more delicious than figs with goat cheese? They make a blissfully easy starter for a high summer dinner party.

Take two to three figs per person and cut them in half lengthways. Cut a log of goat cheese into half-inch slices, one slice per person. Broil the goat cheese slices until a light golden color. Arrange the figs artfully on a small bed of arugula and place the goat cheese on top. Serve with Champagne. The Almanac has no idea whether Champagne goes with these flavors, but she does find it livens up a party. A good dry sherry works too.

Get Your Goat Cheese Here

"Si hortum in bibliotheca habes, deerit nihil," wrote Cicero to his friend Terentius Varro in 46 BC.



This is commonly translated as, "He who has a garden and a library wants for nothing." How true. The literal translation is "If you have a garden in your library nothing will fail." Keep reading, keep growing.

Cicero wrote that letter during the reign of Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus (63 BC–AD 14), who is sometimes called Octavian but better known as Augustus. He was the first Roman emperor and the first to be Augustus. The word comes from the Latin title, meaning venerable, and the month was named after our imperial friend in the year 8 BC. It was considered his lucky month.

Augustus was the great nephew of Julius Caesar. There are those who believe that Julius Caesar was left-handed, though the evidence is shaky. Either way, August 13 is International Left Handers' Day. Famous southpaws include Morgan Freeman, Matt Groening, Whoopi Goldberg and Hans Holbein the Younger.

"A small garden, figs, a little cheese, and, along with this, three or four good friends – such was luxury to Epicurus."

– Friedrich Nietzsche

My Kingdom for a Good Fig

"All figs are soft to the touch, and when ripe contain grains in the interior. The juice, when the fruit is ripening, has the taste of milk, and when dead ripe, that of honey. If left on the tree they will grow old; and when in that state, they distil a liquid that flows in tears like gum. Those that are more highly esteemed are kept for drying, and the most approved kinds are put away for keeping in baskets. The figs of the island of Ebusus are the best as well as the largest, and next to them are those of Marrucinum. Where figs are in great abundance, as in Asia, for instance, huge jars are filled with them, and at Ruspina, a city of Africa, we find casks used for a similar purpose: here, in a dry state, they are extensively used instead of bread, and indeed as a general article of provision."

From *The Natural History* by Pliny the Elder, Book XV, Chapter XXI, translated by Bostock and Riley.

The Fall Garden Beckons

Luxuriate in the heat but don't forget that now is the time to plant your fall vegetable garden. It's all the "c"'s in the first half of the month: cauliflower, cabbage and Chinese cabbages such as Pak Choi and Jade Pagoda. It's not too late to plant collards or cucumbers either; just try to get them in by the middle of the month, a little later on the coast. Plant spinach at the same time. From August 15 onward add kale to the leafy greens. Mustard, leaf lettuce and turnips too. Kohlrabi can be planted through the month. All these vegetables are fairly hardy, but do harvest the cauliflower and leaf lettuce before the first deep frost. That's difficult to imagine now, isn't it?

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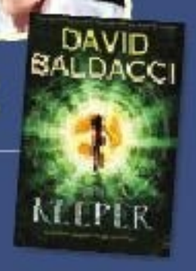
September 10 KEYNOTE OPENING EVENT WITH DAVID BALDACCI

September 11 AUTHORS IN SCHOOLS VISITS & EAT AND GREET EVENTS



September 12 FREE FESTIVAL
at the Milton Rhodes Center for the Arts and Spruce Street

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Betty Brown
Rose Powell MacQueen

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$15.00 tickets advance or at the door

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August 2015

Arts Calendar

Folk Music Festival

8/1

Bathing Beauties

8/6

Superhero Fun Run

8/8

Flashlight Cemetary Tour

8/15

8/1 Library League United
10:30 a.m. – 2 p.m. Celebrate your love of the library superhero style with demos by the Cape Fear Aikido Club and Port City YoYo Club, story time, crafts and a chance to meet your favorite superheroes from Memory Lane Comics. NHC Northeast Regional Library, 1241 Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6371 or www.nhclibrary.org.

8/1 Half Hell Folk Music Festival
11 a.m. – 7 p.m. Folk and Americana music plus farm fresh food and a "tap take-over" by Brunswick County and Southport's newest brewery, Check 6 Brewery. Entertainment includes Daniel Boling, Bonnie Allyn, Paul Obernesser, Brothers Egg, Red, White & Bluegrass, and Christine Martinez. Greendslands Farm, 668 Midway Road Southeast, Bolivia. Info: (910) 253-7934 or www.greenlandsfarmstore.info.

8/2 Live Opera
3 p.m. Opera Wilmington presents Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Sung in Italian with English subtitles. Optional cast party at 6 p.m. Admission: $20–80. UNCW Cultural Arts Building, 5270 Randall Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.opera-wilmington.org.

8/2 Purple Heart Dinner
4–10 p.m. Celebration/dinner to honor area Purple Heart recipients. Includes guest speaker and a chance to meet local heroes. Admission: $25. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5101 or www.businessmadecasual.com.

8/2 Boogie in the Park
5–7 p.m. The Overtyme Band performs rock & roll. Bring blankets and snacks. Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

8/3 Greenfield Lake Concert
5:30 p.m. Award-winning vocalist and revered guitarist Warren Haynes performs with Railroad Earth. Admission: $37–41. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-3614 or greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

8/3 Word Weavers
7–9 p.m. Christian writers' group meeting. Life Point Church, 3534 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 619-7344 or sondradron@bellsouth.net.

8/3–8 Summer Pop-Up!
11 a.m. – 12 p.m. & 2:30–3:30 p.m. Furs and Skulls. A chance to learn about the critters who live in the Lower Cape Fear. Admission: $5–8. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4362 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

8/3 & 10 Bird Walk
9–11 a.m. Explore a shorebird-nesting colony with Wrightsville Beach Bird Stewards. Binoculars, sunscreen and water recommended. Free. Wrightsville Beach Public Access 43, Jack Parker Boulevard, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 686-7527 or wbbirdsteward.blogspot.com.

8/5–9 Live Musical Theater
8 p.m. (Wednesday – Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Opera House Theatre Company presents *Chicago*. Admission: $31. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

8/5 & 19 Black River Nature Cruise
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Cruise the Black River with coastal ecologist and author Andy Woods. Admission: $40–49.50. Cape Fear Riverboats, 101 South Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-1611 or cfrboats.com.

8/6 Bathing Beauties
6:30 p.m. A look at beach goers through the medium of vintage post cards exhibiting how attire has changed from the 1880s to the 1930s. Admission: $5. Latimer House Museum, 126 South Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-0492 or www.lcfhs.org.

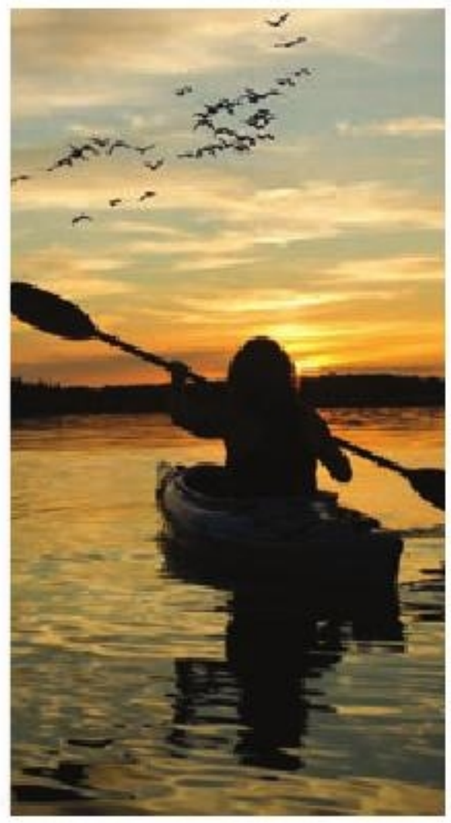
8/6 Sounds of Summer
6:30–8 p.m. The Imitations perform Motown and beach music. Free. Wrightsville Beach Park, 1 Bob Sawyer Drive, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

Art Show & Sale

8/20-22

Compost Workshop

8/21



Sunset Kayaking

8/26

Sacred Harp Singing

8/30

8/6 Concert at CAM
7–8:30 p.m. Ed Stephenson and the Paco Band, a Spanish music and nuevo flamenco ensemble, perform original songs in the courtyard. Admission: $5–12. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

8/6–9 Live Theater
7:30 p.m. (Thursday – Saturday); 3 p.m. (Sunday). Thalian Association presents Tom Stoppard's *The Real Thing*. Admission: $25. Red Barn Studio Theatre, 1122 South Third Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 254-1788 or www.thalian.org.

8/7 Coastal Birding Cruise
10 a.m. Board the Shamrock for a one-hour tour with Captain Joey Abbate. Admission: $25–35. Blockade Runner Beach Resort Dock, 275 Waynick Boulevard, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 509-2838 or www.nccoast.org.

8/7 Airlie Concert
6–8 p.m. Boba Funk performs funk and R&B. Food and wine available for purchase. Admission: $2–9. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or www.airliegardens.org.

8/7 Music on the Town
6–9 p.m. Chillin' Dixie performs country music; entertainment for the kids includes bounce houses, cotton candy and snow cones. Free. Mayfaire Town Center, 6835 Main Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-5131 or www.mayfairetown.com.

8/8 Carolina Beach Pro-Am
8 a.m. – 6 p.m. During the EVP Beach Volleyball tour, watch elite athletes compete on the sand for top honors and interact with the pros by participating in contests and promotions throughout the day. Admission: $80 (registration); free for spectators. Beach Boardwalk Access, Carolina Beach. Info: www.evptour.com.

8/8 Superhero Fun Run
9–11 a.m. A one-mile walk, run or jog during which kids are encouraged to wear superhero costumes and dodge water balloons. Superhero crafts to follow. Bring a canned good to donate. Myrtle Grove Public Library, 5155 South College Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6391 or www.nhclibrary.org.

8/8 Rock the Block
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Health Fair and Summer Festival featuring health screenings for diabetes, dental and vision, plus immunization shots, free school supplies, kid's zone, youth talent show, latin dance competition and motorcycle show. Free. MedNorth Health Center, 925 North Fourth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 202-8641 or www.mednorth.org.

8/8 Family Science Saturday
10 & 11 a.m. A chance to see dinosaurs big and small, discover why Wilmington's Giant Ground Sloth is not a dinosaur, investigate fossils, and make a dinosaur model to take home. Admission: $5–8. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4362 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

8/8 Battleship 101
10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Volunteers engage visitors in the subjects of gunnery, radar, sickbay, galley, engineering and daily shipboard life. Admission: $6–14. *Battleship NC*, 1 Battleship Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-5797 or www.battleshipnc.com.

8/8 Pipeline to a Cure
6 p.m. Fundraising gala that honors local and nationally renowned surfers and raises awareness and funds for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. Admission: $150. Country Club of Landfall, 800 Sunrunner Place, Wilmington. Info: (919) 845-2155 or www.cff.org.

8/8 Summer Waves Concert
6–9 p.m. The Other Guys perform acoustic rock, pop and Americana. Free. Annsdale Park, 1007 Evangeline Drive, Leland. Info: (910) 371-2434 or www.brunswickforest.com.

8/8 & 22 Skateboard Clinic
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. Beginner skateboard clinic for youth ages 7–12 that teaches equipment familiarity, how to identify safety hazards, the basic setup of a skatepark, and fundamental skills. Admission: $15. Greenfield Grind Skatepark, 302 Willard Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 362-8222 or www.wilmingtonnc.gov.

8/10 Storytelling
11 a.m. – 12 p.m. Storytelling with Joan Leotta, a member of the North Carolina Storytelling Guild. Expect a Jack tale and other favorites from local and traditional folklore. Free. Northeast Regional Library, 1241 Military Cutoff Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-6373 or www.nhclibrary.org.

8/10 & 11 Youth Nature Program
10–11 a.m. Nature program for children ages 2–5 featuring story time, crafts and a short hike. This week's theme: "Pond Life Study." Admission: $3. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

8/10–15 Summer Pop-Up!
11 a.m. – 12 p.m. & 2:30–3:30 p.m. Native Americans. Learn about the daily life of the Cape Fear's earliest residents, explore local artifacts and tools, and play a historic game. Admission: $5–8. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4362 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

8/12 Airlie Bird Walk
8–9:30 a.m. Join Wild Bird & Garden's Jill Peleuses and Airlie Gardens environmental educators for a scenic bird walk. Admission: $3–9; free passes available at Wild Bird & Garden. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-6001 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

8/12 Coastal Speaker Series
7 p.m. Masonboro Island: A Natural Paradise with a Purpose. Hope Sutton, Southern sites manager for the N.C. Coastal Reserve, will share updates on the reserve's research projects, citizen science initiatives and public education programs as well as the history of the island and its long-term management plan. Suggested donation: $10. Coastal Education Center, 309 West Salisbury Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 509-2838 or www.nccoast.org.

8/13 Greenfield Lake Concert
6 p.m. Live performance by newgrass jam five-piece band the Infamous Stringdusters. Admission: $20–25. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-3614 or greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

8/13 Jazz at the Mansion
6:30–8:30 p.m. Benny Hill performs on the Bellamy lawn. Beer and wine cash bar available. Admission: $12. Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-3700 or www.bellamymansion.org.

8/13 Forward Motion Dance
7 p.m. An evening of modern and contemporary dance featuring the Forward Motion Dance Company with guest performers from DREAMS, The Dance Cooperative, South East Dance Academy and The Dance Element. Included will be a piece composed and performed by Wilmington musician Joe Cordaro plus excerpts from a new film created by Patrick Ogelvie in collaboration with dancers. Admission: $5–10. Weyerhaeuser Reception Hall, Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

8/14 Pleasure Island Concert
6:30–8:30 p.m. South of K performs bluegrass favorites. Free. Fort Fisher Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureislandnc.org.

8/14 & 15 Seaglass Salvage Market
9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Friday & Saturday). Indoor/outdoor eclectic market featuring up-cycled and repurposed furniture, home décor and accessories, garden and yard décor, jewelry, chocolates, salvage art, mid century modern pieces and industrial salvage items for DIY projects. Located at 1987 Andrew Jackson Highway, Leland. Info: www.seaglasssalvagemarket.com.

8/14–16 Port City RibFest
11 a.m. – 11 p.m. (Friday & Saturday); 12–7 p.m. (Sunday). National BBQ and music festival featuring world champion pit masters, live music, kids' zone, karaoke and a marketplace. Admission: $7. North Waterfront Park, Cowan & Nutt Streets, Wilmington. Info: (336) 707-9188 or www.portcityribfest.com.

8/15 Arboretum Program
9:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. Principles of Landscape Design, a workshop that explores various types of landscapes and the principles of landscape design. Bring a drawing or photo of a spot in your yard to design or re-design. Event includes a tour of the Arboretum gardens. Admission: $10. NHC Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7660 or arboretum.nhcgov.com.

8/15 Flashlight Cemetery Tour
7:30–9:30 p.m. Historical walking tour of North Carolina's oldest rural cemetery led by local historians Chris Fonville, Ed Gibson and Superintendent Eric Kozen. Bring your own flashlight. Admission: $15. Oakdale Cemetery, 520 North Fifteenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-5682 or www.oakdalecemetery.org.

8/15 & 16 Wahine Classic
8 a.m. Surfing competition open to all female surfers including pro shortboard and longboard divisions as well as amateur shortboard, longboard and stand-up paddle board. South End, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 465-9638 or www.wrightsvillebeachwahineclassic.com.

8/15–23 Sarus Festival
Festival for site-specific and experimental art. International and local artists perform new works created for our area and offer workshops and performance opportunities to community members. See website for schedule. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: www.sarusfestival.org.

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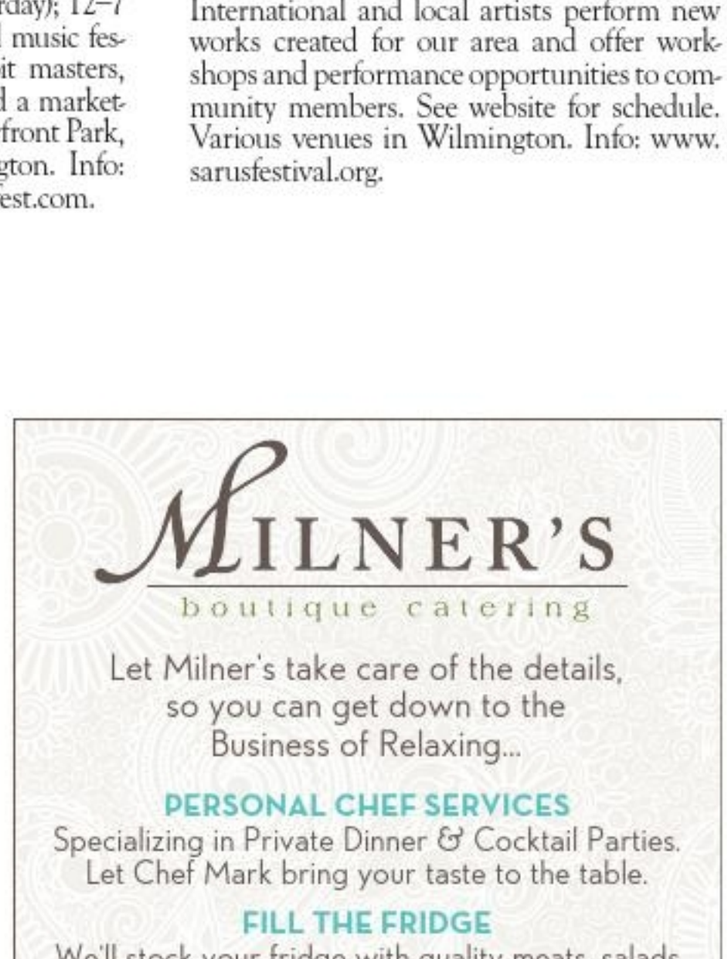

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8/15 & 29 Discovery Hike
10–11:30 a.m. Discover the plants and animal species of Halyburton Park while inspecting the ecosystems that make the area biologically diverse. For children ages 5 and older. Free. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

8/16 Works-in-Progress Showcase
2–3 p.m. Choreographers present works-in-progress to be reviewed and critiqued in a nurturing environment. Free. Weyerhaeuser Reception Hall, Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

8/16 Boogie in the Park
5–7 p.m. Machine Gun joins the "Boogie in the Park" summer concert series performing a variety of music. Blankets and snacks welcome. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

8/17–22 Summer Pop-Up!
11 a.m. – 12 p.m. & 2:30–3:30 p.m. Creative Construction encourages participants to work together to complete building challenges and practice engineering skills. Admission: $5–8. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4362 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

8/18 & 25 Arboretum Program
9:30–11:30 a.m. Back to Basics: Gardening in the Southeast. Six-week class covers a range of soils, nutrition, insects, diseases, and pruning and cultivating tips for gardening in our area. Also includes take-home materials and demos. Admission: $50. NHC Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7660 or www.arboretum.nhcgov.com.

8/19 Southport Bird Walk
8:30–9:30 a.m. Meet at the store for a bird walk around Southport's beautiful historic district and waterfront. Free. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Southport. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgarden-inc.com.

8/19 Snake & Turtle Feeding
4–4:30 p.m. Brief presentation about the live animals on display in the Halyburton Park Event Center followed by the feeding of at least one snake and turtle. Admission: $1. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

8/19 Greenfield Lake Concert
6 p.m. Hard Working Americans (rock supergroup). Admission: $26–31. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-3614 or greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

8/20 Greenfield Lake Concert
5:30 p.m. Aaron Lewis, lead singer of rock/metal band Staind, performs as part of his solo country music tour. Admission: $32.50–35. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-3614 or greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

8/20–22 Art Show & Sale
10 a.m. – 7 p.m. Summer juried art show and sale hosted by the Landfall Foundation in collaboration with the Wilmington Art Association. Event features 100 artists offering works in oil, watercolor, acrylic, photography, sculpture and ceramics. Free admission. Proceeds benefit the Landfall Foundation. Dye Clubhouse, 1550 Landfall Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 512-6283 or landfall-foundation.org/artshow.html.

8/21 Compost Workshop
8:30 a.m. Compost 101. Learn the how, why and what of multiple methods of composting with hands-on demos in the garden. Admission: $10. NHC Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7677 or arboretum.nhcgov.com.

8/21 Southport Paint-n-Pour
4:30–6:30 p.m. Join artist Kathleen McLeod for a fun, step-by-step art class. Art supplies provided; bring your own beverage. No painting experience necessary. Admission: $35. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Southport. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wild-birdgardeninc.com.

8/21 Airlie Concert
6–8 p.m. Signal Fire performs reggae hits. Food and wine available for purchase. Admission: $2–9. Airlie Gardens, 300 Airlie Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7700 or www.airliegardens.org.

8/21 Greenfield Lake Concert
6:30 p.m. Bruce Hornsby and The Noisemakers perform. Admission: $35–40. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-3614 or greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

8/21 & 22 Rummage Sale
7 a.m. – 2 p.m. Annual rummage sale featuring housewares, clothing, furniture, linens, jewelry, glassware, luggage and other assorted items. Proceeds benefit the North Carolina Sorosis Clubhouse. Sorosis Clubhouse, 20 South Cardinal Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 791-6128.

8/22 Southport Bicycle Tour
8 a.m. Slow-paced bicycle tour through historical Southport. Pre-registration required. Admission: $20–28. The Adventure Company, 807-A Howe Street, Southport. Info: (910) 454-0607 or www.theadventure-company.net.

8/22 Greenfield Lake Concert
7 p.m. Singer/songwriter Donovan Frankenreiter performs. Admission: $22–25. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-3614 or greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

8/22 & 23 Amateur Golf Tournament
8 a.m. Men's City Amateur Golf Tournament is limited to 132 players. Includes greens fees each day, lunch, awards and a tee gift. Admission: $100; Cart fee is $12 per day. Wilmington Municipal Golf Course, 311 South Wallace Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 791-0558 or www.

wilmingtonmuni.com.

8/24 & 25 Youth Nature Program
10–11 a.m. Nature program for children ages 2–5 featuring story time, crafts and a short hike. This week's theme: "Habitat, What's That?" Admission: $3. Halyburton Park, 4099 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

8/25 Greenfield Lake Concert
6 p.m. John Hiatt & the Combo perform with the Taj Mahal Trio. Admission: $49.50. Greenfield Lake Amphitheater, 1941 Amphitheater Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-3614 or greenfieldlakeamphitheater.com.

8/26 Sunset Kayaking
4–8 p.m. Halyburton Park presents a Masonboro Island Sunset Kayak trip beginning at Trails End Park. Ages 13 and older. Admission: $35–45. Trails End Park Boat Launch, 613 Trails End Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

8/26 Page to Stage
6:30–8 p.m. A series of readings featuring a mixture of comedy and drama written and performed by local authors and producers. The public is welcome to attend and offer feedback. Free. Weyerhaeuser Reception Hall, Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

8/27 An Evening with Bukowski
7:30 p.m. Old Books on Front Street and C'est la Guerre Theatre Co. present "An Evening with Bukowski" featuring live readings of Bukowski's work, a preview of C'est La Guerre's upcoming production, *Bukousical*, and ham on rye sandwiches. Old Books on Front Street, 249 North Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 762-6657 or oldbooksonfrontst.com.

8/28 Southport Chirp
9–10 a.m. Informal gathering of bird and birding enthusiasts. Bring questions, bird sightings and stories to share with local bird lovers. Free. Wild Bird & Garden, 105 East Brown Street, Southport. Info: (910) 457-9453 or www.wildbirdgardeninc.com.

8/28 Fourth Friday
6–9 p.m. Downtown galleries, studios and art spaces open their doors to the public in an after-hours celebration of art and culture. Free. Various venues in Wilmington. Info: (910) 343-0998 or www.artscouncilofwilmington.org.

8/28 Pleasure Island Concert
6:30–8:30 p.m. The Will McBride Group performs pop and jazz. Free. Fort Fisher Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureislandnc.org.

8/29 Recovery RockFest
7 p.m. A clean and sober event featuring live music by Melissa Ferrick, Folkstar, Mike Blair and the Stonewalls, and Stray Local. Admission: $25–30. Portion of proceeds supports UNCW's CRC Recovery Program. UNCW Kenan Auditorium, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 962-3500 or www.recoveryrockfest.com.

8/29 Hospice Gala
7 p.m. – 12 a.m. The Last Chance for White Pants Gala is a fundraiser for Lower Cape Fear Hospice featuring live music by The Free, heavy hors d'oeuvres, cocktails and a raffle for a 2015 Audi Cabriolet convertible. Admission: $125. Audi Cape Fear, 255 Old Eastwood Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 796-8099 or www.lcfhfoundation.org/event/last-chance-white-pants-gala.

8/30 Sky Quest
1:30, 2:30 & 3:30 p.m. Discover the world of astronomy in the museum's digital planetarium. Admission: $5–8. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4362 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

8/30 Sacred Harp Singing
1:30 – 4 p.m. Join Wilmington Sacred Harp Singers in performing a dynamic form of a cappella social singing dating back to Colonial America. Free. Weyerhaeuser Reception Hall, Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or cameronartmuseum.org.

8/30 Lumina Daze
5–9 p.m. Fundraiser/celebration featuring live music by Wilmington Big Band, the Dixieland All-Stars and The Imitations, dancing, live and silent auctions, and presentations on Wrightsville Beach history. Admission: $15. Proceeds benefit Wrightsville Beach Museum. Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Boulevard, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-2569 or www.wbmuseum.com.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

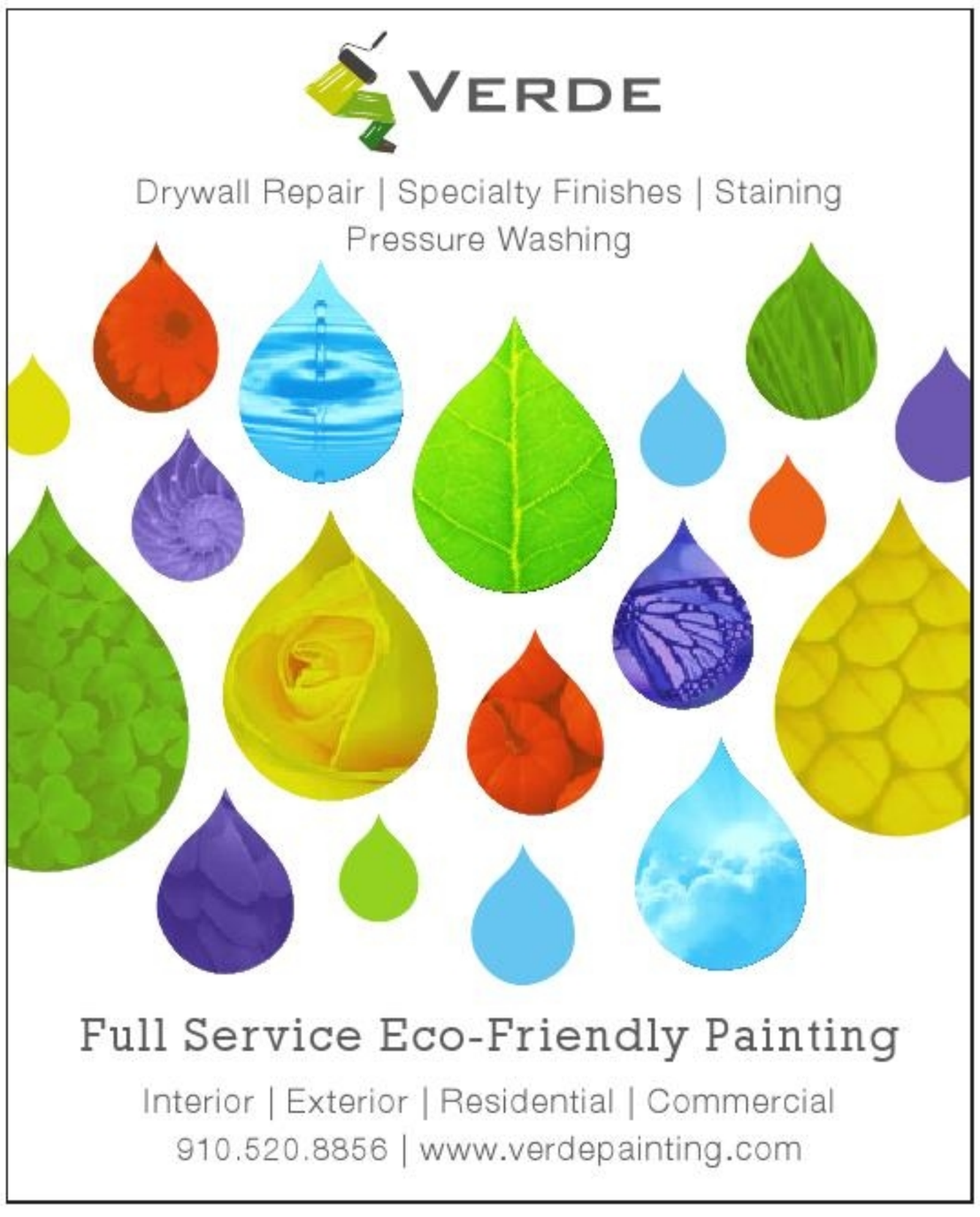
Monday Farmers' Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside beach market offering a variety of fresh, locally grown produce, baked goods, plants and unique arts and crafts. Municipal Grounds, Seawater Lane, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

Monday–Wednesday Cinematique
7 p.m. Independent, classic and foreign films screened in historic Thalian Hall. Check online for updated listings and special screenings. Admission: $7. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. Info/Tickets: (910) 632-2285 or www.thalianhall.org.

Tuesday Kure Beach Market
8 a.m. – 12 p.m. Open-air market featuring locally grown produce and artisan crafts. Open through 8/25. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Tuesday Wine Tasting
6–8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus wine and small plate specials all night. The Fortunate Glass, 29 South Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fortunateglasswinebar.com.

Tuesday Cape Fear Blues Jam
8 p.m. A unique gathering of the area's finest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Bring It Downtown

Blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join the fun. No cover charge. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Avenue. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Tuesday & Wednesday Movie Express
10 a.m. Family-friendly summer movie series hosted by Regal Cinema. 8/4 & 5: *Muppets Most Wanted* (2014, PG, 107 min.) & *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (2014, PG, 81 min.). 8/11 & 12: *The Lego Movie* (2014, PG, 100 min.) & *The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water* (2015, PG, 92 min.). Admission: $1. Regal Cinema at Mayfaire, 900 Town Center Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-1857 or www.regmovies.com/movies/summer-movie-express.

Wednesday Farmers' Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Open-air market held on the front lawn of the historic Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, landscaping and bedding plants, herbs, baked goods and the best in handmade art and craft items. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 US Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 686-9518 or www.poplargrove.org/farmers-market.

Wednesday Story Time by the Sea
10–11:30 a.m. Join characters from Fairytales and Dreams by the Sea for stories, crafts and games. Come dressed as your favorite character and take photos with the princesses. Admission: Free. Ocean Front Park, 105 Atlantic Avenue, Kure Beach. Info: (910) 458-8216 or www.townofkurebeach.org.

Wednesday T'ai Chi at CAM
12–1 p.m. Qigong (Practicing the Breath of Life) with Martha Gregory. Open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Wednesday & Friday Beachside Music
6–9 p.m. Live music on the pier. 8/5: Brennan Simmons; 8/7: Mykel Barbee; 8/12: Rob Ronner; 8/14: Selah Dubb; 8/19: Mykel Barbee; 8/21: Tony Barnes; 8/26: Mike Frusia; 8/28: Mykel Barbee. Oceanic, 703 South Lumina Avenue, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-5551 or oceanicrestaurant.com.

Thursday Yoga at the CAM
12–1 p.m. A soothing retreat open to beginner and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Thursday Boardwalk Blast Music
6:30–9:30 p.m. Family-friendly concerts with sunset firework displays. 8/6: JackJack 180 (pop & rock); 8/13: Zion (reggae); 8/20: Blivet (variety); 8/27: LaCi (rock, pop & R&B). Free. Carolina Beach Boardwalk, Cape Fear Boulevard, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureislandnc.org.

Friday Downtown Sundown
6–10 p.m. Free downtown concerts overlooking the Cape Fear River. 8/7: Red Zeppelin (Led Zeppelin tribute); 8/14: Satisfaction (Rolling Stones tribute); 8/21: Same As It Ever Was (Talking Heads tribute); 8/28: Tuesday's Gone (Lynyrd Skynyrd tribute). Riverfront Park, North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 763-7349 or www.wilmingtondowntown.com.

Friday & Saturday Dinner Theater
7 p.m. TheatreNOW presents JT and Joni in *Jail*, a musical exploring the 1960s folk music scene and a rapidly changing world. Show features music by Pete Seeger; Joni Mitchell; James Taylor; Peter, Paul and Mary and more. Admission: $18–32. TheatreNOW, 19 South Tenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or www.theatrewilmington.com.

Saturday Farmers' Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Outdoor "island-style" market featuring live music and local growers, producers and artisans. Includes produce, wines, meats, baked goods, herbal products and handmade crafts. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 & Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 431-8122 or www.carolinabeachfarmersmarket.com.

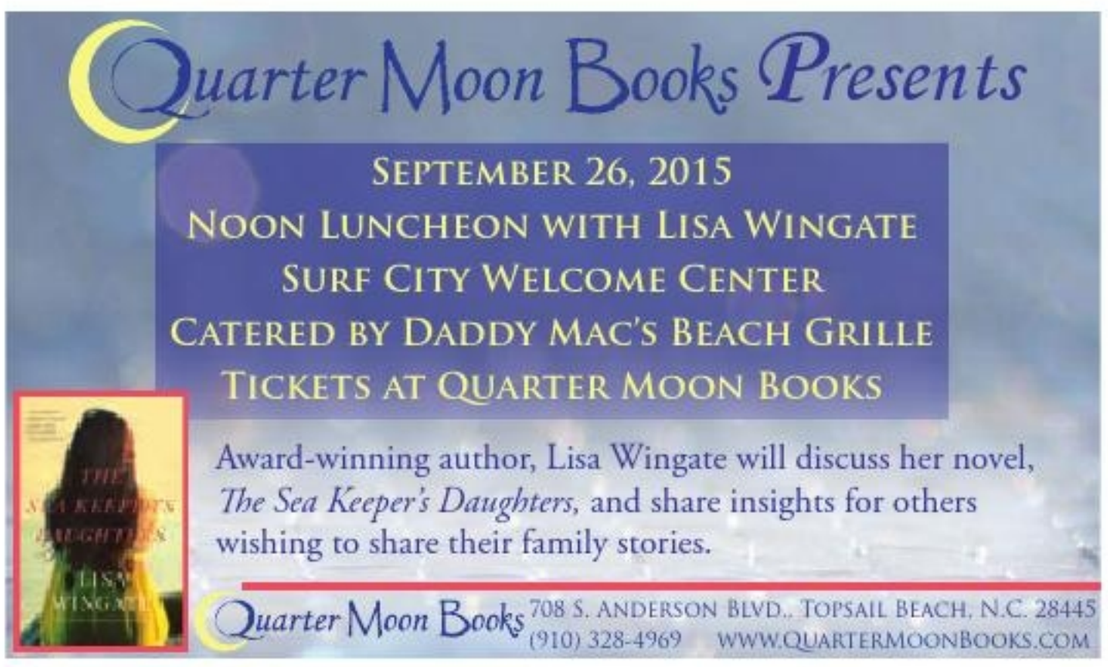
Saturday Riverfront Farmers' Market
8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artists, crafters and live music along the banks of the Cape Fear River. Products include fresh produce, herbs, flowers, meats, baked goods, canned items, wine, art and more. Riverfront Park, North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtondowntown.com/events/farmers-market.

Saturday Carnivorous Plant Hike
10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Explore the Stanley Rehder Carnivorous Plant Garden and learn about different types of carnivorous plants and the history of the garden. Free. Piney Ridge Nature Preserve, 3800 Canterbury Road, Wilmington. Info: (910) 341-0075 or www.halyburtonpark.com.

Sunday Bluewater Waterfront Music
4–7 p.m. Summer concerts on the waterfront patio. 8/2: Velcro (1980's tribute); 8/9: Overtyme (classic rock & beach); 8/16: Brent Stimmel (folk, pop & country); 8/23: Back of the Boat (yacht rock); 8/30: Machine Gun (hard rock). Bluewater Waterfront Grill, 4 Marina Street, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-8500 or www.bluewaterdining.com.

Sunday Movies at the Lake
8:45 p.m. Family-friendly outdoor movie screening by the lake. Popcorn, soda and candy available for purchase. 8/2: *The Boxtrolls* (2014, PG, 96 min.); 8/9: *Beethoven* (1992, PG, 87 min.); 8/16: *Big Hero 6* (2014, PG, 102 min.); 8/23: *Hook* (1991, PG, 142 min.). 8/30: *Mr. Hobbs Takes a Vacation* (1962, AP, 116 min.). Admission: Free. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 and Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-8434 or www.pleasureislandnc.org.

To add a calendar event, please contact Ashley at ashley@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted the first of the month, one month prior to the event.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Port City People

Sounds of Summer
Wrightsville Beach Park
Thursday, July 2, 2015
Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Salina Lee and Curtis Theiman with Double

Kim, Rob, Olivia, Addie, and Alex Hargett

Caroline & Adam Tart

Bill & Erica Winstead

Melinda and Dale Walker with Gallatin

Eddie Bakewell, Jennifer Persichetti

Joe & Bonnie Davis

Rob, Heather & Myra Crowder

Michelle and Morgan Shackelford with Mako

Bethany & Donnie Bullers with Jack

Annabel Maschal, Ashley Fraasa, Dana Davy

Maggie & Kelly Castor

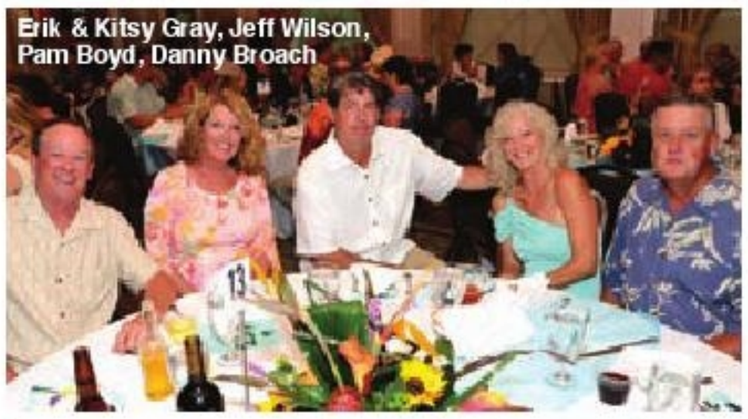
Port City People

A Night in the Islands
The WARM "Raise the Roof" Gala and Auction
Friday, June 19, 2015
Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Lu & Sandy Alford, Kathy & Bob Dixon , Chris & Jean Mowery

Clay Collier and Dana Gore

Greg & Emily Katzman


Erik & Kitsy Gray, Jeff Wilson, Pam Boyd, Danny Broach

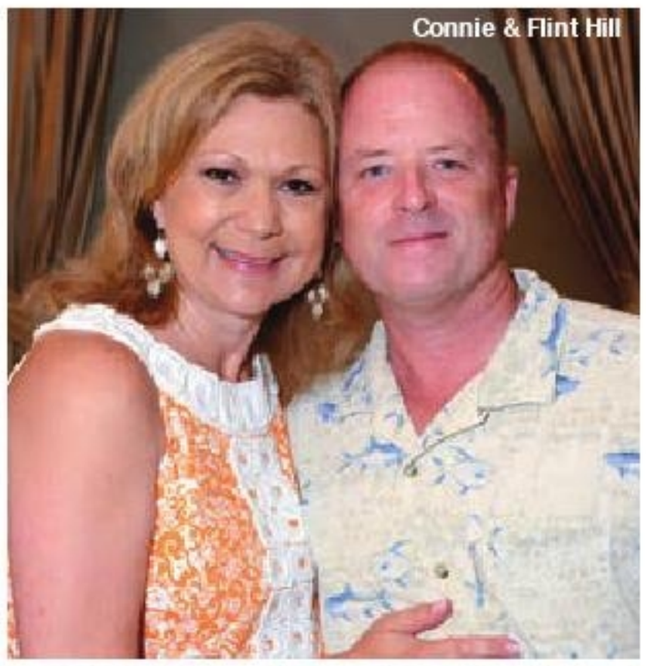
Pam Boyd, Ashley Miller, Dana Fisher

Brian Sims, Tricia Brown, JC Skane

Tracy & Dan Robison, Karen & Bill King

Jason Bolin, Jeannette Woodruff, Kevin Sikorski

Sarah & Adam Shay


Connie & Flint Hill

Blythe & Evan Rhodes

Kalie McErlean and Melissa Woodruff

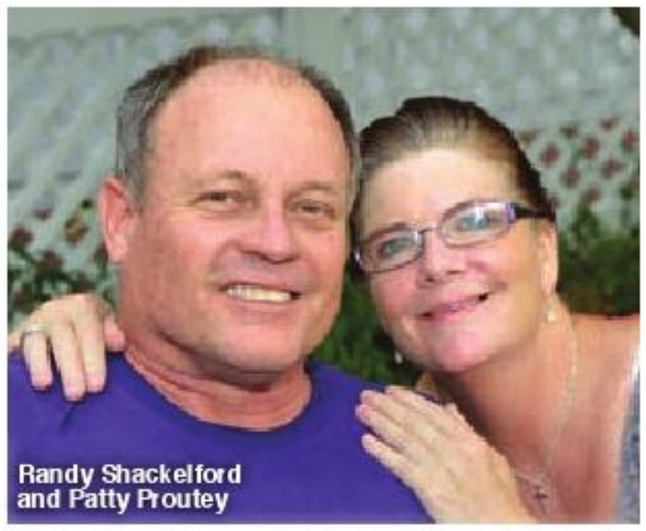
Neal Turner and Meghan Wilhelm

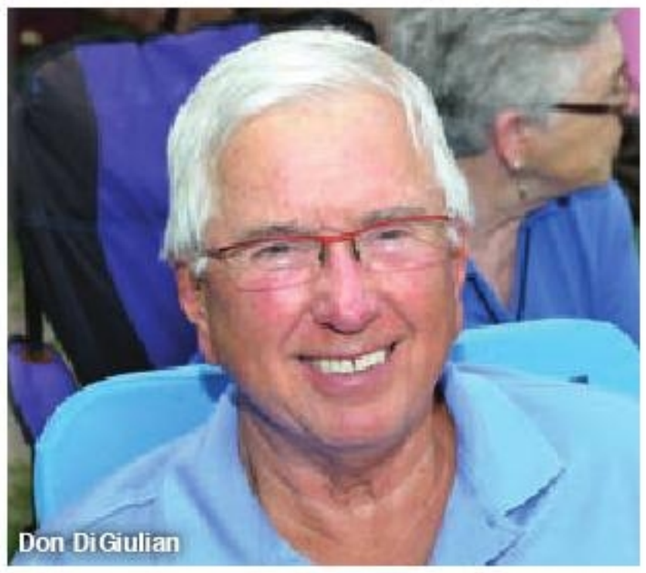
Port City People

Jazz at the Mansion
Bellamy Mansion
Thursday, July 9, 2015
Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Josh & Peggy Luedtke, Jim Liberman

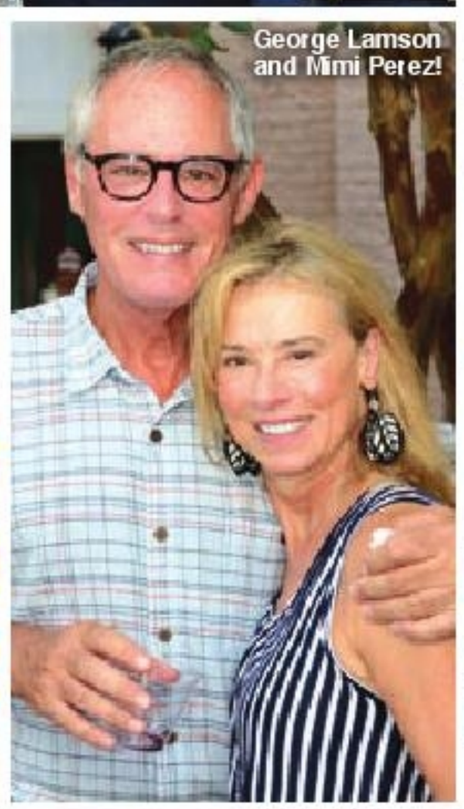
Janet & Bob Stephens, Faye & Bob Shannon


Randy Shackelford and Patty Proutey


Don DiGiulian

Karen & Philippe Chevrotee

Fran McFadden


George Lamson and Mimi Perez!

Linda Cunningham, Mike & Gary Cunningham, Wanda Dean

Rosetta Pollard and Helen Hall

Jimmy Johnson and Betty Weathersby

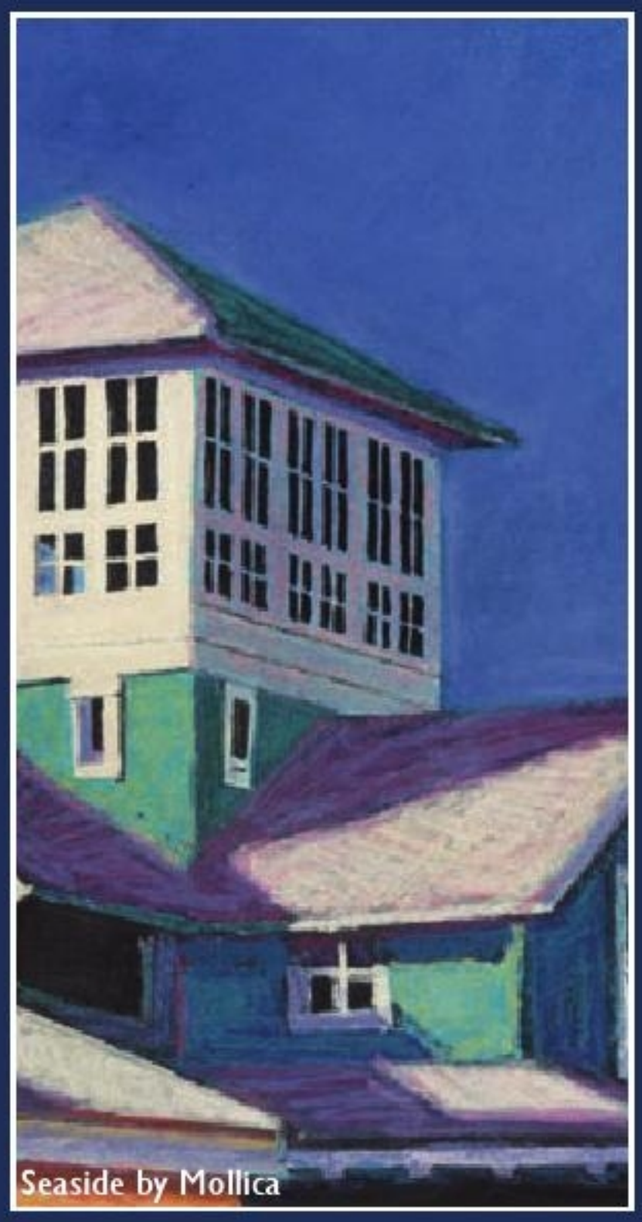
Karen Reed, Anne Zabriskie with Ashlynn Reed

Janice Lagala, Maurea Blomquist, Merle Outlaw, Arlene Jurow, Margaret Graff, Connie Petrone

Tiffany Jackson and Mary Brannock

Carole Bohrer and Lurie Macfarland

Max Levy and the Hawaiian Shirts band


Seaside by Mollica

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Port City People

July 4th Celebration
Downtown Wilmington
Saturday, July 4, 2015
Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Calvin and Crystal Callahan, Abigail Summers, Novalee & Luis Aguilera

Fern Bugg and Dr. Ron Dye

James Brown ("Papa Soul")

Michaela, Jackson, Sharon & Molly Hamelin

Jessica & Jade Williams

Maxx, Samantha, & Nolynn Dunworth

Jason & Ashley LaCourse, with Addison & Elora

Samantha Reinbold and Jevon Pearce with Zelda

Audrey & Thomas Gay

Haley, Jesse & Chelsie Coffey, Jesse Smith

Mike & Shannon Mancuso

Lashon & Dion Byrd

Peg Allen & Richard Cousins

Marie Ashworth and Poodle Lockhart

The August Forecast

I'm peachy keen this summer

By Astrid Stellanova

August is a month that celebrates something I love, which is, in a word, peachy. When peaches come in season late May, I eat them till I just about bust, probably sometime around September. I'd eat the pits if they weren't so hard to digest. Juicy peaches dripping with a dollop of whipped cream — Lord a'mercy, that is a match made in celestial dreams. Favorite fantasy? A good-looking man to peel me a white peach and feed it to me. Slowly. Beau, if you are reading, that's romantic, Honey.

Leo (July 23–August 22)
Child, all your friends want is for you to live up to your ego. You were born under a complicated sign in a complicated month; the first atom bomb detonated on August 6, 1945, and Richard Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974. All of which tells the Universe that August is a tough time of the year, with more than a little trouble afoot. You are good at keeping your cool, so you will soldier on through whatever storm strikes. Sprinkle some sugar over whatever sour thing happens; use your fabulous talents to keep quiet and smile mysteriously. You are too cool for school this month, and the world is going to hear you roar!

Virgo (August 23–September 22)
This is what keeps your friends baffled: You seem to always fall for the stranger with an aura of nothingness. That's right — you are sharp but emotionally you get buffaloed by the first fool to buy you a drink. Slow that nonsense down. In the bar of life, you are frequently overserved. Don't let smooth talk make you act as dumb as the box of dirt they are trying to palm off on you as black gold.

Libra (September 23–October 22)
Sometimes, you just don't know when to let bygones be bygones. The troubles of the past keep getting resurrected because you just can't let go. If you bundled up your troubles and threw 'em in the road, Honey, you would go back and try and get 'em! This is a good month to get your chin up and try to let the past be past. If you had any idea what a nice month is ahead, you would not want to revisit times gone by.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
You are so in love with your own sense of mystery that you forget that nobody else actually cares. Open up and let people know you better — you have a lot of acquaintances, but you could really use a friend. Friends make the going easier when things get rough, and we all hit rough water sooner or later. Speaking of water . . . some tall drink of water is going to offer you something your heart desires. Don't throw rocks at it.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)
When you are overworked or overstressed, or plain overly dramatic and get into a snit, you are a "vampire on a paper route" type of tired and angry person. It is true that you have had more on your plate than you ought to have to balance, but when you get past this milestone you are going to find an easier path to walk. Sugar, when you come to the fork in the road, take it, or your friends are going to have to shoot you with a tranquilizer dart right about the middle of the month.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
You have got some comical ideas about your own destiny and place in it. This is a good month to take a hard look at your resume and get real. Take a class in something you need to master. Honey, operating a stapler or a glue gun ain't office skills, and sorting the recyclables for the trash pickup don't make you a captain of industry. Challenge yourself and don't leave your talents unused.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
Sometimes, you seem unusually baffled by the simplest things. This month it would take a third hand just for you to scratch your backside. Life doesn't have to be this complicated. Speak your truth, and let the chips fall where they may. All those people you have been trying to protect need to stand on their own two feet and not lean on you. Besides, Sugar, you ain't got but three hands any old how.

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
Take care of the biscuits, Honey, and your life will be gravy. That basically means (if you are trying to decipher this piece of advice, and I imagine you are) you have got to get into the kitchen of life and make some real dough before you are qualified to jump on the gravy train to glory. This will require you to get in and knead it yourself, not to recruit somebody else. And when you get it right, the dough is going to rise sure enough, Sweet Thing.

Aries (March 21–April 19)
There is nothing lonelier than an Aries when the Ram runs outta money. Honey, you have been the bank for some needy friends and family, but now you have to curtail your generosity and set some money aside for your own oatmeal fund in your old age. I can hear your bitchin' from here. Yes, your heart was in the right place, but this is Astrid telling you it is time to try austerity. At least for a month, which is the amount of time it takes for your entire attention span to be chewed up.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
There is some kind of cuckoo genius inside you that just knows how to predict trends and get in front of a curve. Use this talent, because you finally have a moneymaker of a concept that could make you rich faster than American Pharoah can eat up a dirt track. Kickstarter was made for your kind of smarts; others will soon see the potential in your new contraption.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)
If the hands fall off your watch, look up. It could be your astral connection is speaking to you from Uranus. Have you ever thought about how many unusual coincidences fill your so-called ordinary life? It's about time you recognized that you have got some big woo-woo powers. I can see it in the star chart, Sugar.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
Summer is not your best time, which makes no sense to you. But some of your most difficult things have happened during the long hot summer. You need a relaxing change of scenery and a little change of perspective. Which means, this year you might have to go a little further than the county line if you really want to feel renewed. Push that boat off the shore and paddle like hell till your frustrations go.

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path. This summer, she'll be reading tea leaves and crystals ("Not the book," she clarifies. "We're talking oolong and tigers eye.")

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January 10, 2016
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Daniel Rozin
Purring Tiger (Aaron Sherwood and Kiori Kawai)
Gabriel Craig and Michael Remson
This exhibition explores the innovative ways artists are utilizing technology, perception and audience interaction in creating their work.
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Cameron Art Museum
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Magazine

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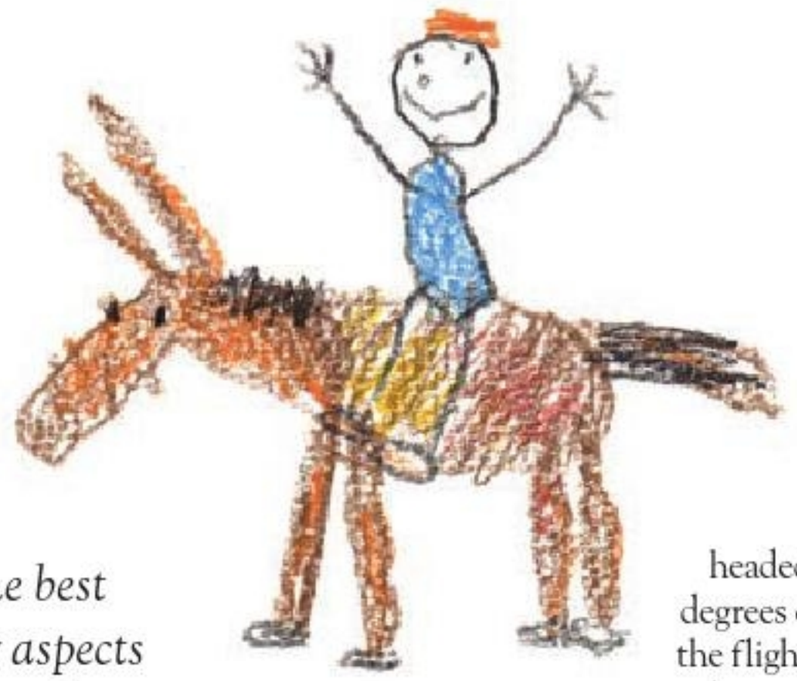
What Really Happens in Las Vegas

Fortunately stays there



By Clyde Edgerton

We are fortunate that our family can afford a summer trip out west. That experience this past June was unforgettable in the best of ways. Some of the more frustrating aspects near the end of the trip are told below – from a child's perspective. I wrote the first draft and then each of my children, in turn, helped me with the edit.

Today we finally get almost to the end of our summer trip out west. We are going to leave from Las Vegas tonight and fly all night. We rented a minivan about eight or nine days ago and have been driving a lot. This afternoon, we drove about six hours from up in Utah where a massacre took place. Dad had to look at these tombstones and a monument for about three hours after he told us a long, boring story about a wagon train and all these people getting massacred, which was sad. On the way to the tombstone place, Mom wanted to turn off on all these back dirt roads to get there, and when Dad realized that the people who got murdered had come along the same way – on this road called the Old Spanish Trail – he got all excited and turned onto the dirt road and we got lost until he used the compass in the rearview mirror, which we had to find for him.

After all the tombstones and stuff, while we are riding to Las Vegas in the back of the minivan, we watch a movie while Mom and Dad keep looking at these giant rock mountains. All in all, on the whole trip, we stay in the back of the car for over 2,000 miles and look at over 2,000 rock mountains and thank goodness they let us watch a movie once in a while. I think Mom took over 2,000 billion pictures.

We are leaving tonight at 10:55 p.m.

We get to Las Vegas – where we will fly from – in the afternoon and we see a lot of big pictures of women without many clothes on. We go to an exhibit called *Bodies*. Real dead bodies are in these rooms. And we go into a store where a diamond watch is for sale for $220,000; and we see a roller coaster and a Ferris wheel; and water shooting up into the air; and tall, gold buildings. We go into a hotel and then into a room as big as a gym where there are all these glittery gambling machines. This is called a casino. Dad loses thirty dollars very fast, while we walk around because a woman said we were not allowed to stand there and watch him.

We are now unpacking our rental car at the big airport because it's time to go home, and we are putting our extra junk into a giant duffel bag that Dad bought at Goodwill for ten dollars. Mom got some rocks and they are going in the duffel bag. She also found two big colorful towels in a trash can right there at the rental car place and got them out and is putting those into the duffel bag. Gross.

We turn in the keys to the rental car people.

We get all our bags into a shuttle bus, and are now headed to the airline terminal. It is very hot. It was about 111 degrees one time today. Dad asks Mom for a piece of paper with the flight information. She is sitting on one side of the shuttle bus and we are on the other. She hands it across to him. He looks at it. He gets a funny look on his face.

She says, "What?"

He swallows.

She says, "What?"

He says, "We are twenty-four hours early."

It is now the next day. We are staying at the Hampton Inn. We are walking around Las Vegas again.

When we park the last time before going back to the airport again tonight to catch our flight, we are in a parking lot underneath a hotel and we walk up some back stairs and into the back of a casino. We are close to a goldfish gambling machine. We will remember where we came in – close to the goldfish machine – so we can find our car later.

About two hours later after we walk around a long time and finally eat dinner, we can't find the goldfish machine. We can't find our car. Mom and Dad seem frustrated because it is time to go to the airport again. Dad keeps looking at his watch and Mom keeps walking fast. We have to keep following them around looking for our car. This takes a long time. They talk to the police and casino workers about where the goldfish machine might be but nobody knows. We for sure can't find our car. It is somewhere in Las Vegas.

We finally find out that our car is under the hotel next door where there is another casino. Mom and Dad seem frustrated. We find the car and head for the rental car place. We are following signs that say RENTAL CAR RETURN. Then there are no more signs and we seem to be back downtown somewhere and Dad says, "We missed the turn." He pulls over and starts typing stuff into his phone. We have to do a U-turn. Two of us are fighting. He yells at us to be quiet. We finally find the rental car place and leave the car and start over with the shuttle bus like last night.

We fly all night and get home the next morning. It was a good trip. And I am very tired. The best thing of all was the mule ride at the Grand Canyon.

Clyde Edgerton is the author of ten novels, a memoir and a new work, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *This summer, the Thomas S. Kenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW says he is re-reading* As I Lay Dying *by William Faulkner. "Recently finished last page and turned to first page to start again. I don't remember doing that before."*

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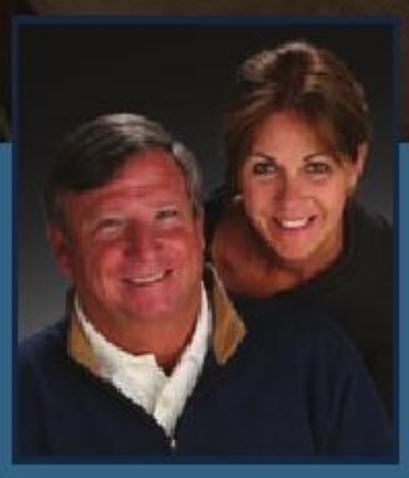

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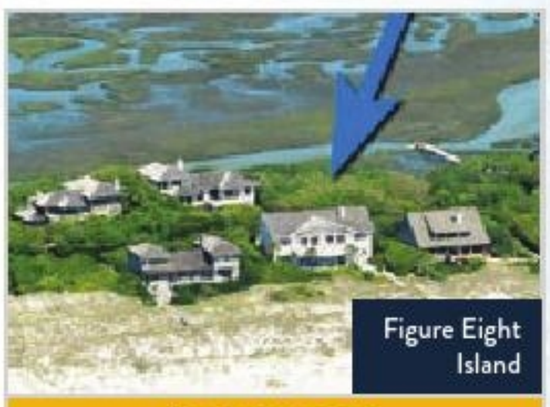

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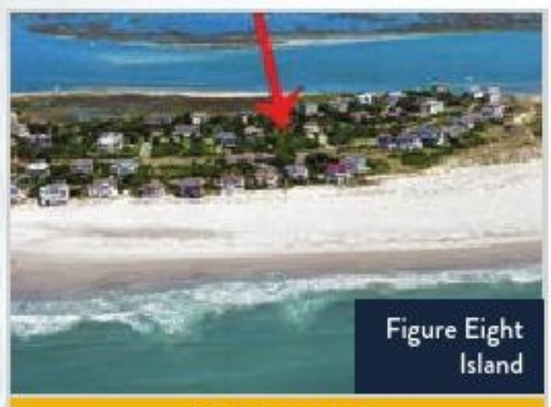

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